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SALAR

DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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Nepal gets 1st woman PM as ex-CJ Karki takes oath

51 including Indian dead in until now; Parliament dissolved

Kathmandu, 12 Sept

Former Chief Justice (CJ) Sushila Karki was sworn in as Nepal's interim Prime Minister on Friday, following the resignation of KP Sharma Oli and the dissolution of Parliament

Karki, 73, becomes the first woman to lead the Himalayan nation as Prime Minister.

Her appointment follows days of violent youth-led protests that resulted in the deaths of at least 51 peo-ple, including Indian national Rajesh Devi Gola, 55, from Ghaziabad. She died while trying to escape from her burning hotel in Kathmandu. Three policemen were also killed by a mob in Koteshwor, Kathmandu.

The protests, driven by 'Gen Z' demonstrators, erupted over corruption, political disorder, nepotism, and a now-lifted ban on social media. At least 19 protesters died when police opened fire near Parliament. Nearly 1,700 people were injured, and over 1,000 have since been discharged from hospitals.

Mother of 23-year-old Subhash Bora, who was killed in protests mourns at his cremation in Kathmandu on Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

Karki's appointment came after consultations between President Ramchandra Paudel, the Army chief, and youth protest leaders. Her first act is expected to be the formal dissolution of Parliament and the announcement of new elections.

The protests also caused major economic damage. The Hotel Association Nepal reported losses exceed-ing NPR 25 billion, with the Hilton Hotel alone suffering NPR 8 billion in damages. Nearly two dozen ho-tels were looted or torched.

In response to the unrest, Indian security forces along the Indo-Nepal border have intensified patrols to prevent the entry of escaped Nepali inmates. Six fugitives were caught in Bahraich on 11 September. Surveillance has been heightened using drones, and local village committees have been directed to re-port suspicious activity.Meanwhile, the situation in Kathmandu is slowly returning to normal, though curfews remain in place and military prohibitory orders continue in parts of the capital. The Army and police are gradually resum-ing operations across the valley. *—PTI*

1ST SINCE 2023 UNREST

266 deaths later, PM to visit Manipur

IMPHAL, 12 SEPT

- Opposition leaders criticised the visit as "symbolic" and a "farce".

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Manipur on 13 September , marking his first trip to the state since ethnic violence broke out in May 2023, leaving over 260 dead and thousands displaced.

During the visit, Modi will interact with internally dis-placed persons (IDPs) in Churachandpur and Imphal, and inaugurate development projects worth Rs 8,500 crore. He will also address two pub-lic gatherings—at Peace Ground in Churachandpur and Kangla Fort in Imphal.

According to Chief Secretary Puneet Kumar Goel, the Modi's visit aims to restore "peace, trust, and reconcilia-tion." Manipur remains under President's Rule since former chief minister N Biren Singh resigned in February.

Modi will lay foun-dation stones for projects worth over Rs 7,300 crore in Churachandpur, including a Rs 3,647 crore drainage and asset manage-ment proj-ect and the Rs 550 crore Manipur Infotech Development (MIND) project. In Imphal, he will inaugurate the new Manipur Police HQ (Rs 101 crore) and civil secretariat (Rs 538 crore).

As of June, around 57,000 IDPs remain in relief camps, down from 62,000 last year. Security has been tightened, with air guns banned, barri-cades erected, and moats patrolled at Kangla.

Opposition leaders, includ-ing Congress's Jairam Ramesh, criticised the visit as "symbolic" and a "farce." However, BJP MP Leishemba Sanajaoba and Kuki-Zo groups welcomed the visit as "historic."

The PM will arrive from Aizawl and con-tinue on to Mizoram, Assam, West Bengal, and Bihar during his multi-state tour from 13–15 September. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 3 and 4

Monsoon to withdraw on 15 September: IMD

NEW DELHI, 12 SEPT

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has announced that the south-west monsoon is likely to begin its withdrawal from northwest India around 15 September. Typically, the monsoon starts retreating from this region around 17 September, con- cluding its presence by 15 October. This year, monsoon coverage across India was achieved nine days ahead of the usual date of 8 July. In fact, it began on the Indian main-land as early as 24 May, marking the earliest onset since 2009. So far, the nation has received 836.2mm of rainfall, with northwest India recording 720.4mm—34 per cent above normal levels. *—PTI*

'Short circuit caused by water leak led to AI crash'

WASHINGTON DC, 12 SEPT

Lead attorney Mike Andrews, representing fami-lies affected by the AI171 plane crash, has filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request for the flight data recorder (FDR) infor-mation. He posits new evi-dence suggesting a water leak-induced short circuit, rather than pilot error, as the crash's cause. Andrews referenced a Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) airworthiness direc-tive concerning Boeing 787 models, warning of water leaks potentially affecting critical electronics. The AI171 tragedy on 12 June resulted in the deaths of 260 individuals, including passengers and crew, mark-ing one of India's deadliest aviation disasters. *—ANI*

SC clears ₹5,000 cr payout to Sahara depositors

NEW DELHI, 12 SEPT

The Supreme Court of India has approved the disbursal of Rs 5,000 crore from the SEBI-Sahara Refund Account to repay deposi-tors of the Sahara Group of Cooperative Societies. A bench of Justices Surya Kant and Joymalya Bagchi granted this motion on 12 September 2025 and extended the disbursal deadline from 31st December 2025 to 31 December 2026. The alloca-tion comes following a simi-lar order on 29 March 2023. The transferred funds will be managed by former Supreme Court judge R Subhash Reddy, ensuring scrutiny for genuine claim-ants. The Centre reported claims exceeding Rs 1,13,504 crore lodged by around 5.43 million inves-tors, with refunds issued to over 2.6 million depositors totalling Rs 5,053.01 crore thus far. *—PTI*

Suspect in Charlie Kirk's killing arrested

OREM, 12 SEPT

President Donald Trump announced on Friday that the suspect in the assassination of conservative activist Charlie Kirk has been captured. "With a high degree of certainty, we have him," Trump said during a live interview on Fox News.

The suspect in custody in connection with Kirk's killing is a 22-year-old from Utah, a law enforcement official told The Associated Press. Authorities have identified the suspect as Tyler Robinson, said the official, who was not authorised to discuss the ongoing investigation and spoke on the condition of ano-nymity.

Kirk was shot on Wednesday while speaking at a Turning Point debate at Utah Valley University in Orem. He was rushed to hospital but was pronounced dead hours later. Authorities said the shooter

The suspect is 22-yr-old Tyler Robinson from Utah **PHOTO: PTI**

fired a single round from a high-powered, bolt-action rifle before fleeing by jumping off a rooftop and vanishing into nearby woods.

Federal investigators and state officials had released enhanced images and video of the suspect, triggering over 7,000 tips from the public. As of Friday, authorities have not publicly named the suspect or revealed a motive. The killing has become the latest act of political violence to shock the United States and ignite renewed calls for security reform. *—PTI*

>>>More on Pages 5 & 6

Ban firecrackers across India not just Delhi: SC

NEW DELHI, 12 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Thursday raised pointed ques-tions over the selective impo-sition of the firecracker ban in the Delhi-NCR region, saying if clean air was a right for "elite" residents of the national capi-tal, the same must extend to citizens across the country.

A bench comprising Chief Justice B R Gavai and Justice K Vinod Chandran was hear-ing pleas concerning regula-tion of firecrackers in the national capital region. "If cit-ies in NCR are entitled for clean air, why not people of other cities? Whatever policy has to be there, it has to be on a pan-India basis. We cannot have a policy just for Delhi because they are elite citizens of the country. "I was in Amritsar last winter and the pollution there was worse than in Delhi. If firecrackers are to be banned, they should be banned throughout the coun-try," the CJI observed.

The Bench asked the Additional Solicitor General Aishwarya Bhati, appearing for the Centre, to get a detailed report on the issue from the Commission for Air Quality Management. The law officer said the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) was examining the feasibility of "green crackers" to reduce pollution.

Senior advocate K Parameshwar, representing some parties, expressed con-cern saying alongside the restrictions, authorities were also cancelling their existing licenses, to which the bench remarked there would be sta-tus quo with regard to cancel-lation of fire crackers' licences by the authorities. The matter has been posted for further hearing on 22 September. *—PTI*

SC DEFERS BAIL PLEAS OF UMAR, IMAM TO 19 SEPT

NEW DELHI, 12 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Friday adjourned the bail pleas of activists Umar Khalid, Sharjeel Imam, Gulfisha Fatima and Meeran Haider in the UAPA case related to the alleged conspiracy behind the February 2020 Delhi riots to 19 September, saying the court had received the files late.

The activists have chal-lenged the 2 September Delhi High Court order which denied bail to nine persons, including Khalid and Imam, saying "conspiratorial" vio-lence under the garb of demon-strations or protests by citi-zens couldn't be allowed.

The High Court said the Constitution affords citizens the right to protest and carry out demonstrations or agita-tions, provided they are order-ly, peaceful and without arms and such actions must be within the bounds of law.

Those who faced bail rejec-tion included Khalid, Imam, Fatima, Mohd Saleem Khan, Shifa Ur Rehman, Athar Khan, Meeran Haider, Abdul Khalid Saifi and Shadab Ahmed. The bail plea of anoth-er accused Tasleem Ahmed was rejected by a different High Court bench on 2 September.

Khalid, Imam and the rest of the accused persons were booked under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and provisions of the IPC for allegedly being the "masterminds" of the February 2020 riots, which left 53 people dead and over 700 injured.

The violence erupted during the protests against the CAA and NRC. *—PTI*

CP Radhakrishnan sworn in as India's 15th Vice President

Vice President CP Radhakrishnan assumes charge as Chairman of the Rajya Sabha at Parliament House in New Delhi **PHOTO: PTI**

NEW DELHI, 12 SEPT

Chandrapuram Ponnusamy Radhakrishnan was sworn in as the 15th Vice President of India on Friday, later taking his place as the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha within Parliament. President Droupadi Murmu administered the oath during a brief ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhawan, attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and several Union ministers.

Dressed in a red kurta, Radhakrishnan, 67, took the oath in English, invoking the name of God, and received congratulations from Murmu upon completion. He succeeds Jagdeep Dhankhar, who resigned on 21 July for health reasons.

- Dressed in a red kurta, Radhakrishnan, 67, took the oath in English, invoking the name of God, and received congratulations from President Murmu.

In the vice-presidential elec-tion, Radhakrishnan tri-umphed over joint opposition candidate B Sudershan Reddy by a margin of 152 votes. Dhankhar attended the cere-mony, his first public appear-ance since resigning, along-side other dignitaries includ-ing former presidents and opposition leaders.

"Victory of the nationalistic ideology," Radhakrishnan remarked on his election, pledging to work towards making India a developed nation by 2047. After the cere-mony, he paid floral tributes to Mahatma Gandhi and for-mer Prime Ministers Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Charan Singh. *—PTI*

FIGHT OVER WASHING MACHINE

K'taka man beheaded by co-worker in US motel

HOUSTON, 12 SEPT

A 50-year-old Indian-origin motel manager was beheaded in front of his wife and son in Texas following a dispute over a washing machine, police said. The suspect, a co-worker with a criminal record, has been arrested and charged with capi-tal murder. The incident took place on Wednesday morning at the Downtown Suites motel in Dallas.

Chandra Mouli "Bob" Nagamallaiah, originally from Karnataka, was killed after a dispute over a broken washing machine with his 37-year-old Cuban co-worker Yordanis Cobos-Martinez. Cobos-Martinez reportedly became enraged when Nagamallaiah asked another person to translate his instruc-tions instead of addressing him directly.

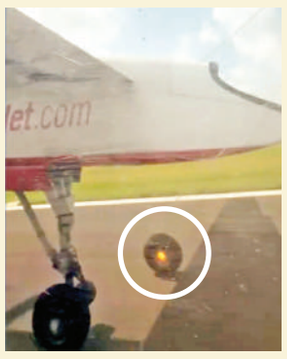
Surveillance footage showed Cobos-Martinez attacking Nagamallaiah with a machete. The victim fled toward the motel office, where his wife and 18-year-old son were present.

Nagamallaiah's wife and son tried to inter-vene several times, but Cobos-Martinez pushed them away and contin-ued the attack. He then took the victim's cell phone and key card from his pockets before again resuming the attack until Nagamallaiah's head "was removed from his body", police said in court affidavit. "The sus-pect then kicked Nagamallaiah's head twice into the parking lot and proceeded to pick it up and carry it to the dumpster and put it inside," police said.

Cobos-Martine is being held without bond. If convicted, he could face life imprisonment without parole or the death pen-alty. According to official records, he has been arrested twice for auto theft in Florida and has indecency with a child and assault charges in Houston.

The Consulate General of India in Houston condoled the death of Nagamallaiah and said it is following up on the matter closely. *—PTI*

SPICEJET PLANE LOSES TYRE AMID TAKE-OFF IN KANDLA



One of the officials said rear right wheel of the aircraft was missing **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

MUMBAI, 12 SEPT

In a significant incident, a SpiceJet Q400 aircraft lost a wheel shortly after take-off from Kandla Airport on Friday, prompting an emer-gency landing at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA). The air-craft, carrying 75 individu-als, landed safely at 15.51 according to Mumbai air-port operator MIAL, con-firming that all passengers and crew were unharmed.

An official revealed that the rear right wheel of the aircraft was missing and that an Air Traffic Controller at Kandla informed the SpiceJet pilot of the situation. Consequently, a full emer-gency was declared for flight SG2906.

"Fortunately, the aircraft's landing gear was retracting because of which it was able to land safely," the official added. MIAL noted that, although a full emergency was declared as a precau-tion, normal operations resumed shortly after the aircraft safely landed on Runway 27. *—PTI*

CII Mysuru to host tech conclave on 7 Oct

MYSURU, 12 SEPT

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) Mysuru Zone will host its annual Manufacturing & Technology Conclave and Expo on 7 October 2025 in the City, themed "Building World-Class Competitiveness through Technology, Automation & Quality Excellence." The event aims to gather over 100 participants, including MSMEs, large enterprises, industry leaders, and policy enablers. Chairman Nagaraj Gargeshwari stated, "This conclave is about equipping Mysuru's industries and MSMEs with the technologies, skills, and sustainable practices needed to compete globally." The sessions will cover topics such as precision manufacturing and AI integration, alongside a demo and expo showcasing the latest technologies for business growth and sustainability. *—Salar News*

People fall ill due to water from new borewell in Mandya

GAURIBIDANUR, 12 SEPT

A team of doctors was sent to Mandya's Bheemanahalli village today after reports emerged of numerous residents falling ill due to the switch to a newly dug bore well for drinking water. Upon examination, approximately thirty-five villagers, primarily the elderly, were assessed, revealing that fifteen individuals were suffering from throat infections. Mahesh Kumar, the District Health Officer, stated, "Steps have been taken to collect blood samples and water samples from the affected people." He clarified, "Only fifteen people are suffering from throat infections, and there were no complaints of stomach pain or diarrhoea." To ensure the ongoing health of the village's 484 residents, a clinic will be established, and a team of doctors will maintain a round-the-clock presence. *—Salar News*

FRESH CASTE CENSUS TO COST RS 420 CR, SAYS CM

CM says survey will have 60 questions to make it scientific

BENGALURU, 12 SEPT

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Friday announced that a fresh Social and Educational Survey, popularly known as the caste census, will be conducted across the state from 22 September to 7 October, at an estimated cost of Rs 420 crore.

The survey, overseen by the Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes led by Madhusudhan R Naik, will gather data on the socio-educational status of 7 crore people across 2 crore households. It will use a 60-question questionnaire and aims to be "scientific" in its methodology, Siddaramaiah told reporters.

Approximately 1.75 lakh government school teachers will be trained and deployed during Dasara holidays, each covering 120–150 houses. Teachers will receive up to ₹20,000 remuneration, making up the bulk of the Rs 420 crore budget, with ₹325 crore allocated for payment. More funds will be released if needed.

The Chief Minister said the survey is essential for ensuring social justice and equal opportunity. He urged citizens to cooperate with enumerators and provide truthful information. ASHA workers will visit households beforehand to distribute application forms.

Each house will be geotagged via electricity meter numbers and assigned a Unique Household ID (UHID). Over 1.55 lakh households have already been mapped. Even households without electricity connections will be included to ensure no exclusions.

The survey will collect data on religion, caste, education, employment, land ownership, and other socio-economic indicators. Ration cards and Aadhaar will be linked to mobile numbers, and a helpline (8050770004) is available for grievances or support. An online participation option will also be provided.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah *PHOTO: SALAR*

Responding to questions, Siddaramaiah noted that while the Centre is planning caste enumeration in the national census, it will not include socio-educational data, making the state's survey necessary.

The Cabinet approved the new census on 12 June, effectively nullifying the 2015 survey, which cost Rs 165.51 crore and faced criticism for being "unscientific." Influential communities such as Vokkaligas and Veerashaiva-Lingayats had rejected the earlier report, prompting fresh enumeration after directions from Congress leaders Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi. *—PTI*

22 people were arrested by the police and the hunt is on for seven others *PHOTO: ANI*

Mandya cop transferred after Maddur riots

BENGALURU, 12 SEPT

The Karnataka government has transferred the Additional Superintendent of Police of Mandya, Thimmaiah.

The transfer, which came into effect on Friday, is seen as a fallout of the communal flare-up in Maddur. Stones were pelted at the Ganesha immersion procession last Sunday, which led to communal tension. 22 people were arrested by the police and the hunt is on for seven others. The BJP staged a massive demonstration on Wednesday and Thursday in Maddur town,-flaying the stone pelting and holding the state government responsible.

Speaking to reporters here Karnataka Home Minister G Parameshwara on Friday said the department found some lapses and initiated action accordingly. He also blamed the BJP for politicising the issue. "We have been saying from the beginning not to politicise the issue. Leave it to the police to arrest and take legal action against those who pelted stones, irrespective of their faith," he said.

The Minister said, "I don't know what the BJP leaders will achieve by going there and delivering provocative speeches to instigate people. What is conspicuous is that they are doing it for political gain." He said that the BJP wants to turn Maddur into another BJP stronghold like Dakshina Kannada, but the state government will not let it happen. *—PTI*

Cabinet allots land to set up bio-CNG unit in Bengaluru

BENGALURU, 12 SEPT

State Cabinet has cleared key proposals, including allotment of land to GAIL (India) Limited to set up a bio-CNG plant.

"The Cabinet has approved allotment of 18 acres of land at Haralakunte village, Begur Hobli, Bengaluru South Taluk to GAIL India on a 'Permissive Use' basis for 25 years to establish a 300 metric tonne per day bio-CNG unit, expandable up to 500 metric tonnes per day," the Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister HK Patil said while briefing reporters about the Cabinet decision.

He added that the Revenue Department and City Solid Waste Management Limited would jointly survey the land and hand it over with proper maps, while the Urban Development Department's Additional Chief Secretary has been authorised to resolve any operational or implementation issues that may arise. It has also approved issuing guidelines to curb the sale of spurious chemicals in the name of bio-diesel. The Cabinet has decided to approve the draft notification of "The Bio-Diesel (B-100) Blending with High Speed Diesel for Transportation Purposes (Licensing) Order, 2022", he said.

The Cabinet also decided to extend Ayushman Bharat Arogya Karnataka scheme benefits to all senior citizens aged 70 years and above *PHOTO: ANI*

The Cabinet also decided to extend Ayushman Bharat Arogya Karnataka scheme benefits to all senior citizens aged 70 years and above, including ESIS beneficiaries. "This extension has been done as per the Government of India's Vayo Vandana Yojana guidelines and with its approval," he stated. It also gave administrative approval to construct two state-of-the-art 100-bed hospitals at Yelahanka Taluk's Bellahalli and within Animal Husbandry & Agriculture Department premises in Hebbal Assembly Constituency, at a total cost of Rs 100 crore.

To improve service delivery at the grassroots level, government will procure and distribute 3,500 Chromebooks to revenue inspectors and village administrative officers under the State's Digi Revenue Project. *—PTI*

Govt issues draft rules to fix cinema ticket at Rs 200

BENGALURU, 12 SEPT

The State government has announced draft rules to amend the Karnataka Cinema (Control) Rules, 2014, establishing a ticket price cap of Rs 200, excluding taxes, for all theatres in the state, including multiplexes. However, multi-screen cinemas with premium facilities accommodating 75 seats or fewer are exempt from this limit.

In a statement, the government invited feedback from stakeholders within 15 days, to be submitted at the office of the Additional Chief Secretary to Government, Home Department.

"In exercise of the powers conferred by section 19 of the Karnataka Cinema (Control) Act, 1964, the Government of Karnataka has made the draft rules to further amend the Karnataka Cinema (Control) Rules, 2014," the notification stated.

The new Karnataka Cinemas (Regulation) (Amendment) Rules, 2025, are set to come into effect upon their final publication in the Official Gazette. *—PTI*

Case filed against Yatnal for provocative speech

MANDYA, 12 SEPT

Maddur police have registered a case against Vijayapura MLA Basanagouda Patil Yatnal for allegedly making a provocative speech during his visit to Maddur town, officials said on Friday.

According to police, Yatnal arrived in Maddur around 5.45pm on Thursday and addressed a public gathering near the Ram Mandir in Pete Street. In his speech, Patil, who has been expelled from BJP, allegedly made comments stating that "Ganapati idols have the right to pass in front of mosques anywhere in the country" and that "those who object should go to Pakistan."

He is also alleged to have warned that "illegal mosques" would be bulldozed if he came to power, and made further remarks seen as derogatory towards a particular community. Police said the speech was "deliberately made with the intent to hurt religious sentiments and promote enmity between communities."

A case has been registered under relevant sections, and further investigation is underway. *—PTI*

Yatnal urges Banu Mushtaq to skip Dasara

MYSURU, 12 SEPT

Expelled BJP leader Basanagouda Patil Yatnal on Friday urged Booker Prize-winning author Banu Mushtaq not to inaugurate the Dasara festivities.

Speaking after offering prayers at Chamundi Hills, he said idol worship is strictly forbidden in Islam and asked Mushtaq, "If she worships the idol of Goddess Chamundeshwari, she must declare her current religious beliefs," he said, questioning the silence of Muslim clerics on the issue.

Yatnal also criticised the Congress-led State government, alleging rampant corruption and failure in development. He warned of a youth-led revolt similar to Nepal's uprising, saying the Siddaramaiah government would collapse under its own failures.

Accusing ongoing "adjustment politics" between the BJP and Congress leaders, Yatnal called for reorganisation of BJP in State.

He claimed that Union Home Minister Amit Shah now recognises his value post-expulsion, blaming a "father-son conspiracy" in the State BJP leaders. *—Salar News*

METRO HELPS TRANSPORT HUMAN HEART IN 20 MINS

BENGALURU, 12 SEPT

The Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) on Friday said it had facilitated the "swift and safe" transportation of a human heart for transplant.

The organ was moved from Sparsh Hospital and boarded at Yeshwanthpura Metro Station at 11.01pm. It reached Mantri Square Sampige Road Metro Station at 11:21pm on 11 September, BMRCL said in a release.

Covering seven stations in 20 minutes, the Metro enabled a seamless and time-sensitive transfer, ensuring the organ reached Apollo Hospital without delay, it said.

The coordination was overseen by Assistant Security Officer Honne Gowda, along with Metro officials who worked with the medical team to ensure smooth security arrangements throughout journey.

BMRCL said it was committed to supporting such life-saving missions by offering efficient and timely transport collaborating with medical institutions.

On 1 August, Metro had, for the first time since its inception, facilitated transporting of a donated human liver for transplant. *—PTI*

The organ was moved from Sparsh Hospital and boarded at Yeshwanthpura Metro Station at 11.01pm *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

ROADS OF DANGER

Bengaluru's pothole menace endangers lives yet again, as a school bus with 20 children fell into a pothole near Panathur Main Road on Friday. Passersby rushed to rescue the children through the rear door as the bus stayed tilted. The incident follows DyCM DK Shivakumar's admission of 10,000 potholes in Bengaluru *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

Girl stabbed for refusing lover's marriage proposal

BELAGAVI, 12 SEPT

A girl who rejected the marriage proposal of her boyfriend was stabbed by him on her birthday on Friday. The incident occurred at Kokkarne village in Bramhavar taluk of Udupi district around 8.30 am.

Reports said that Karthik who was in love with the girl for a few years had approached her family who refused the proposal. The girl had also blocked his number. On Friday, Karthik approached her with a birthday present which she refused. Angered by this Karthik attacked with a knife which he took with him and escaped. The girl has been admitted to the hospital and her condition is said to be critical. *—Salar News*

ACTIVIST SEEKS SIT PROBE INTO 4 HOSTEL DEATHS IN D'STHALA

MANGALURU, 12 SEPT

Social activist Mahesh Shetty Thimarody has lodged a complaint with the Special Investigation Team (SIT), seeking an inquiry into four unexplained deaths that allegedly occurred in hostels in Dharmasthala between 2006 and 2010, police said on Friday.

According to police, the Belthangady-based activist submitted a complaint at the SIT office in Belthangady on Thursday night.

Thimarody alleged that the deaths, reported from Gayatri, Sharavati and Vaishali hostels in Dharmasthala village, were not investigated in accordance with legal procedure.

In his submission, Thimarody claimed that the deceased were declared as 'unknown persons' and their bodies buried through the local Gram Panchayat without post-mortem or registration of FIRs. Only Unnatural Death Reports were filed in four cases, he alleged. He has also alleged that the handling of the incidents by authorities at the time was irregular. *—PTI*

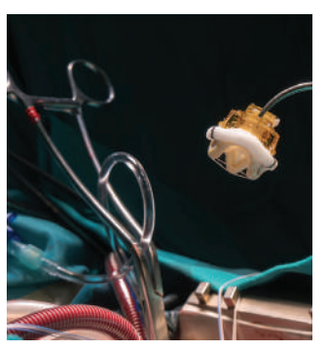
Boy undergoes rare scarless heart surgery

BENGALURU, 12 SEPT

A new invasive surgical technique has made it possible for an 11-year-old boy with a leaking heart valve to get a replacement only with a two-inch incision in the armpit.

Doctors at Fortis Hospital here, who performed the rare, minimally invasive surgery said traditionally valves can be replaced with open-heart surgeries to cut open the chest bone, leaving permanent scars.

"In this child's case, we used a small cut under the arm, avoiding any bone cutting," said Dr Sudarshan G T, Additional Director, Cardiothoracic and Vascular Surgery, Fortis Hospital, Bannerghatta Road.



He said, the minimally invasive surgical technique called transaxillary aortic valve offers advantages like reduced postoperative pain and faster recovery compared to traditional open chest surgery.

"This method not only reduces the risk of infection and pain but also ensures faster healing and a much better cosmetic outcome, especially important for young patients," added the doctor. In India, minimally invasive valve surgeries account for just two to three per cent of all cardiac procedures, making this case a rare milestone in paediatric cardiac care. *—PTI*

'EMBARRASSING INCIDENT'

Doctors deliver baby under mobile flashlight

RAICHUR 12 SEPT

Doctors at the government hospital in Hatti town delivered a baby with the help of torchlight as electricity failed and there were no backup facilities.

According to reports reaching Salar News, a pregnant woman went into labour during a power outage forcing the doctors and the medical team to perform the delivery with the help of torchlight. "The hospital does not have a proper electrical system. There should be an alternative system in case of power outage. It is embarrassing to say that such an incident is happening in town known for its gold mines," Lal Peer, a local resident said. The hospital staff said that the hospital had UPS system which was unfortunately not working that day.

In the wake of this incident, there has been a demand that the health department officials take this incident seriously and make required arrangements at government hospital. *—Salar News*

The hospital staff said that the hospital had a UPS system which was unfortunately not working that day *PHOTO: AI*

PHOTO: ANI

India must project hard power: Defence Secretary

PUNE, 12 SEPT

Amid rising competitive populism and economic protectionism around the world, India needs to project its hard power alongside its soft power, said Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh. Singh was speaking at the Southern Command Defence Tech 2025 seminar (STRIDE 2025) here. Addressing the gathering, Singh said the trend of increasing globalisation and free trade has been brought to a halt by geopolitical factors linked to the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and Europe and the rise of populist leadership patterns across the globe. He also said there is a need to bring academia, research institutes and private and public sectors together to meet the capability enhancement needs. *—PTI*

NIA court summons Pakistan official in terror case

CHENNAI, 12 SEPT

A special NIA court here has issued a proclamation asking Amir Zubair Siddiqui, a Pakistani intelligence official who was working years ago in the Pakistan High Commission in Colombo as a visa counsellor to appear before it on 15 October to answer charges in a terror-conspiracy case. Siddiqui is an absconder in the UAPA case of conspiracy to strike terror by bombing American consulate in Chennai and the Israel Consulate in Bengaluru. He was a "visa counsellor" at the Pakistani High Commission in Sri Lanka, the NIA court's notification said. He faces charges for offences including criminal conspiracy, waging war against India and using a counterfeit currency. *—PTI*

M'rashtra renames Ahmednagar stn as Ahilyanagar

MUMBAI, 12 SEPT

The Maharashtra government on Friday issued a notification renaming Ahmednagar railway station as Ahilyanagar railway station following approval from the Union Home ministry. The state government earlier renamed Ahmednagar district as Ahilyanagar district. Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, who had pursued the matter, thanked Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw for approving the proposal. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Deputy CM Eknath Shinde were part of the efforts, a statement from Pawar's office said. Pawar wrote to Vaishnaw urging that the station be renamed to match the city's new name. Several organisations and citizens had been demanding that the railway station's name be changed after the city's new name. *—PTI*

NCP's neta facing assault case to frame youth policy

MUMBAI, 12 SEPT

The Maharashtra government has inducted NCP leader Suraj Chavan, who had allegedly assaulted an activist in Latur a few months ago, as a special invitee member of the committee formed to draft the state's revised youth policy. According to a government resolution (GR) issued by the School Education and Sports Department on Thursday, Chavan has been appointed as a "special invitee" along with Dhananjay Thackeray, a recipient of the National Youth Award, and advocate Sangram Shewale, a youth activist. Chavan holds the position of General Secretary in the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), led by Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar. His induction, however, could draw objections for hitting an activist in Latur. *—PTI*

'Short circuit caused by water leak led to AI crash'

US attorney files request for access to Black Box data

WASHINGTON, 12 SEPT

The lead US attorney, **Mike Andrews**, representing a majority of the families affected by the tragic AI171 plane crash, had filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request seeking access to flight data recorder (FDR) information from the ill-fated flight, claiming new evidence that supports a water leak-induced short circuit theory as the cause of the crash and not pilot error.

He claimed that this short circuit could have caused the fuel control switches to shut down automatically, resulting in a catastrophic loss of propulsion, and not due to any error by the flight crew.

Andrews backed his claims by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) airworthiness directive (AD) for certain Boeing models. The Air India plane which was involved in the crash in Ahmedabad was a Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner, one mentioned in the FAA's directive.

Both engines of the Air India plane had unexpectedly shut down, leading to a loss of thrust and its rapid descent *PHOTO: PTI*

The AD issued warns about such issues based on multiple reports of water leakage from improperly installed waterline couplings, leading to moisture entering the electronics equipment (EE) bays, a critical area housing flight control systems and avionics.

The directive specifically mandates inspections of aircraft seat tracks above the EE bays for missing or deteriorated sealant, moisture barrier tape, or tape dams, all designed to prevent water intrusion.

On June 12, Air India flight crashed shortly after it taking off from Ahmedabad's Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport, killing 260 people on board and 19 people on the ground.

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau released the preliminary report into the tragic crash, outlining the harrowing sequence of events that unfolded within 90 seconds after takeoff. Both engines of the aircraft had unexpectedly shut down during the climb, leading to a loss of thrust and its rapid descent. *—ANI*

'VISIT A FARCE'

PM's Manipur visit no 'big deal': Rahul

JUNAGADH, 12 SEPT

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday said Manipur has been in trouble for a long time and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the strife-torn state now is not a "big deal" as he insisted "vote chori" (vote theft) remains the main issue before the country currently.

Gandhi will address district and city unit presidents of the Congress and interact with senior leaders in Gujarat's Junagadh.

Modi will visit Manipur on 13 September and interact with internally displaced people in Churachandpur and state capital Imphal. This will be the PM's first visit to the state since ethnic violence broke out in 2023.

A training camp for local party leaders is being organised in Junagadh from 10 to 19 September as part of the Congress' 'Sangathan Srujan Abhiyan' in the BJP-ruled state. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge inaugurated the campaign.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh said that Modi's visit to Manipur was a 'farce' as he would spend less than three hours there.

Modi will also unveil development projects worth Rs 8,500 crore in the state.

Manipur Congress president Keisham Meghachandra termed Modi's visit "merely symbolic", and "not aimed at bringing peace and ensuring justice".

The Congress leader also claimed that the BJP has not properly addressed the prevailing situation.

Meanwhile, several billboards and banners welcoming Modi were put up in Imphal on Friday. *—PTI*

BJP deplores Congress' AI video of Modi's mother

PATNA/ NEW DELHI, 12 SEPT

The BJP and its allies on Friday lashed out at the Congress after the opposition party's Bihar unit posted on social media an AI-generated video depicting Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his late mother, calling it "shameful" and wondering how low it will stoop to target Modi.

The Bihar Congress had on 10 September posted the video on its X handle, with a prompt in Hindi, "'Sahab ke sapno mein aayi maa. Dekhiye rochak samvaad (Mother

came in sahab's dream. Watch an interesting interaction between them.)

The video portrayed Modi's mother criticising him for his politics.

Senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad slammed the Congress and asked how low it would stoop to target Modi.

The Congress said no disrespect was shown to Modi or his mother.JD-U working president Sanjay Kumar Jha said that the party has proved that hurling abuses at Modi's late mother was part of its "well-thought-out strategy".

Union minister Kiren Rijiju said the opposition party has lost its credibility and the trust of the people, yet it has not learnt its lessons.

BJP leader and former Union minister Anurag Thakur said the opposition party and its allies will face a "humiliating defeat" in the coming assembly polls in Bihar. *—PTI*

MAURITIUS PM IN AYODHYA

Mauritius PM Navinchandra Ramgoolam along with wife Veena offer prayers at Ram Mandir, in Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh on Friday *PHOTO: PTI*

Vijay slams Tamil Nadu govt over yatra conditions

CHENNAI, 12 SEPT

With just 24 hours to go before Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) Chief Vijay launches his Yatra in Tamil Nadu, political tensions have erupted over conditions imposed by the DMK government.

On Friday, Vijay said the people of Tamil Nadu had lost faith in the ruling party, which he accused of "misleading" citizens with false promises. He called for an impartial administration that genuinely works for the public.

Vijay's State-wide tour is scheduled to begin on 13 September, near the MGR Statue at Marakkadai in Tiruchi and will continue across all districts in phases until December.

Vijay described the conditions as "unprecedented," claiming no other political leader had faced such restrictions. He urged the government and police to ensure adequate security for both party workers and the public during the gatherings. *—Agencies*

'Trump's tariffs will lead to job losses'

SINGAPORE, 12 SEPT

Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Friday described US President Donald Trump as "mercurial", whose tariffs on goods have started to hit Indian businesses, and a number of jobs have already been lost.

The US has imposed a 50 per cent tariff, including 25 per cent as a penalty for buying Russian oil, on exports from India.

India needs to diversify export markets to mitigate the impact of tariffs, Tharoor said, adding that 1.35 lakh people have lost jobs in the gems and jewellery business, and seafood and manufacturing sectors.

The Congress leader described Trump as an "unusual President" who does not honour the conventional standards of diplomatic behaviour.

Tharoor pointed out that exports of many products became unviable because of the initial 25 per cent tariff, and the additional penalty has made it virtually impossible to enter the US market.

The US should have a uniform policy for every country which buys oil from Russia.

He advocated that India should find common cause with European countries and try to create an Indo-European pole. *—PTI*

Anbumani calls expulsion from PMK invalid

CHENNAI, 12 SEPT

Former Union Minister Anbumani Ramadoss has rejected his expulsion from the Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) by his father and party founder, Dr S Ramadoss, asserting the move is invalid.

On September 11, while his father announced plans to "remove the weeds" from the party, Anbumani continued his state-wide campaign, meeting fishermen in Cuddalore district and addressing coastal erosion issues.

The conflict escalated in April when S Ramadoss appointed himself PMK president, demoting Anbumani, who maintains his position is valid until August 2026, as confirmed by the Election Commission of India. Party lawyer K Balu said the expulsion violated party bylaws.

The feud originated in 2024, after Anbumani opposed the appointment of his nephew, P Mukundan, as youth wing president. Since then, both father and son held rival party meetings*—PTI*

Report 'explosive': Assam CM on Gaurav's Pak links

GUWAHATI, 12 SEPT

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday described the SIT report probing alleged Pakistani links of state Congress president Gaurav Gogoi and his family as "explosive," claiming it exposes a cartel attempting to undermine the country's development.

Speaking at the BJP manifesto launch for the BTC polls, Sarma said the report clearly implicated a Pakistani citizen and the British wife of the Congress MP. He added that the SIT had recovered "many important documents posing a threat to the sovereignty of our country."

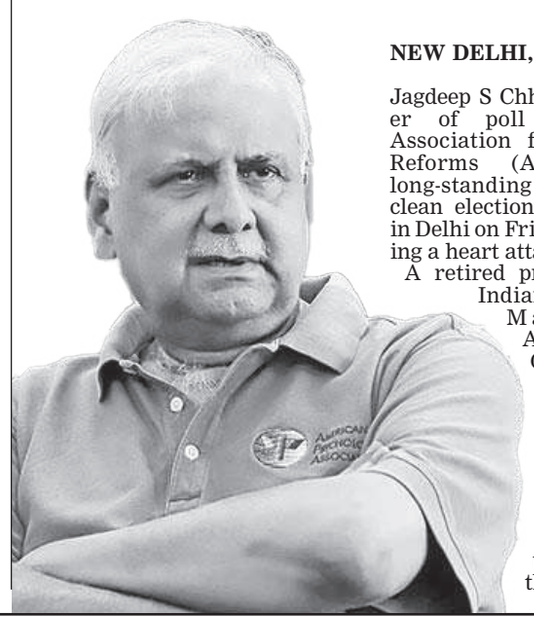
The 96-page report, submitted on Wednesday by Special DGP (CID) Munna Prasad Gupta, will first be discussed by the cabinet. Sarma said the government will decide on public disclosure and next steps only after the BTC elections on 22 September.

He emphasised that the matter is being treated seriously and not for media attention. Responding to Gogoi's criticism and remarks about Rahul Gandhi's alleged body double during the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, Sarma said the media had made Gogoi a "hero" and asserted that the people of Bihar and India would give a fitting reply to Congress's actions. *—PTI*

CM Himanta Biswa Sarma and state BJP President Dilip Saikia during the release of the manifesto for BTC elections in Guwahati *PHOTO: PTI*

'BROUGHT POLITICAL REFORMS'

Chhokar, ADR founder & clean polls' crusader, dies



NEW DELHI, 12 SEPT

- A retired professor at the Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad, Chhokar, along with his colleagues, founded the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) in 1999. The organisation spearheaded many landmark judicial interventions.

Jagdeep S Chhokar, co-founder of poll rights body Association for Democratic Reforms (ARD) and a long-standing advocate for clean elections, passed away in Delhi on Friday after suffering a heart attack. He was 80.

A retired professor at the Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad, Chhokar, along with his colleagues, founded the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) in 1999.

Over the past two decades, the organisation spearheaded several landmark judicial interventions that brought greater transparency and accountability in Indian politics. These included the 2002 Supreme Court judgment making it mandatory for candidates to disclose their criminal cases, assets, and educational qualifications, as well as the 2024 verdict striking down the Electoral Bonds scheme.

Born on 25 November, 1944, Chhokar began his career in the Indian Railways before moving to academia. He pursued an MBA from Delhi University's faculty of management studies and later earned a PhD from the Louisiana State University in the US.

He joined IIM-Ahmedabad in 1985, teaching in the field of organisational behaviour until his retirement in 2006. Chhokar also served as the institute's dean and director-in-charge.

Tributes poured in from across the political and public spectrum following his passing.

Former chief election commissioner SY Quraishia and former election commissioner Ashok Lavasa expressed their condolences on Chhokar's demise.

RJD MP Manoj Kumar Jha described Chhokar's demise as the "silencing of a conscience that spoke relentlessly for the integrity of India's democracy".

Activist and psephologist Yogendra Yadav called Chhokar a "truly selfless champion of democracy and public causes", while lawyer Prashant Bhushan termed his passing "a major setback to democracy in the country". TMC MP Sagarika Ghose called Chhokar an indefatigable warrior. *—PTI*

BJD suspends Prafulla for anti-party acts

BHUBANESWAR, 12 SEPT

The Biju Janata Dal (BJD), Odisha's opposition party, suspended senior leader Prafulla Kumar Mallik on Friday for alleged anti-party activities. This action followed Mallik's recent remarks suggesting he might leave the party if it does not function properly.

Rejecting the allegations, the former minister announced his resignation from the BJD, citing "personal reasons." Mallik, once a close ally of BJD president Naveen Patnaik, served four terms as an MLA and held key ministerial roles. BJD vice-president Pratap Jena stated, "He has failed the test of loyalty" after the party's defeat in the 2024 elections. Mallik argued that his suspension occurred without a show-cause notice.*—PTI*

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

UP hospital closed over death of 2 newborns

GONDA, 12 SEPT

The Uttar Pradesh health department has temporarily closed a private hospital following the tragic deaths of two newborn boys. JM Chishti, Deputy Chief Medical Officer, reported that Manisha, from Sataipurva, had given birth on 5 September at the district women's hospital. After the infant's health deteriorated, he was transferred to a private hospital on Bahraich Road, where he died. The family alleged that nursing staff demanded a bill of Rs 54,482, despite already paying Rs 45,000, and refused to release the body until the full amount was settled. Another newborn boy who had been admitted under similar circumstances also passed away. Following public outrage, hospital operators and the attending doctor fled the premises. A probe is underway. —*PTI*

Drugs may have caused BITS Pilani student's death

PANAJI, 12 SEPT

Traces of drugs have been found in the system of a 20-year-old student who died last week at BITS Pilani's South Goa campus. Chief Minister Pramod Sawant confirmed that the autopsy of Rishi Nair, discovered dead in his hostel room on 4 September, revealed drug traces. Nair's death is the fifth on the campus since December 2024, but the first in which drugs were detected. Superintendent of Police (South) Tikam Singh Verma said enhanced surveillance was imposed around educational institutions to curb narcotics and alcohol use. Aam Aadmi Party leaders met Verma, alleging police inaction against presence of drug peddlers on campuses and demanding stronger measures to prevent narcotics from reaching students. —*PTI*

2 Naxalites killed in encounter in Chhattisgarh

BIJAPUR, 12 SEPT

Two Naxalites were shot dead on Friday during an encounter with security forces in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, police said. The gunfight broke out in the morning in a forested area on the Telangana border during an anti-Naxal operation. After the firing ceased, security personnel recovered the bodies of two Naxalites, a .303 rifle, explosives and other weapons from the site. The operation is continuing and further details are awaited. The clash follows Thursday's operation in Gariaband district, where ten Naxalites, including senior CPI (Maoist) leader Modem Balakrishna, who carried a Rs 1 crore reward were killed. The security forces have eliminated 243 Naxalites across Chhattisgarh so far this year. —*PTI*

Odisha lecturer held for parading wife over adultery

BHUBANESWAR, 12 SEPT

Odisha Police have arrested a 43-year-old college lecturer and his associate for allegedly assaulting and publicly humiliating his estranged wife and her male friend in Nimapada town, Puri district. The incident occurred on 9 September when the lecturer and his friend forced their way into the woman's rented home, where she has lived separately for years, and allegedly attacked both. The lecturer accused his wife of having an affair, a claim denied by her and her companion. A video clip circulating online shows the pair being beaten and paraded through the streets, although its authenticity has not been verified. Both men were charged with outraging the woman's modesty and assault. —*PTI*

Protest in Assam as Morans demand ST status

Ahead of PM's visit, protesters demand BJP fulfil promises

TINSUKIA, 12 SEPT

The All Moran Students' Union demanded that PM Modi keep his promises of granting sheduled caste status to the community to protect their identity and culture **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

Just days ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the Northeast, widespread protests have broken out in Assam. Protesters demanding Scheduled Tribe (ST) status for the Koch-Rajbongshi and Moran communities turned violent in Assam's Golakganj and Tinsukia regions, following police baton charges on student demonstrators. Several protesters, including women, were injured.

On 10 September, around 20,000 Moran community members marched in Tinsukia, organised by the All Moran Students' Union (AMSU), demanding ST status, land rights, and cultural protection. The protesters warned of an economic blockade from 15 September if their demands remain unmet.

AMSU president Polindra Bora condemned "unfulfilled" government promises, recalling Modi's pledge to grant ST status to the Morans and five other communities within 100 days of the BJP taking office. The protesters warned of intensifying agitation if demands are ignored before the 2026 elections.

General Secretary Jaikanta Moran accused successive governments, including Congress, AGP, and BJP, of treating the community as "political tools." He stressed that ST status was "essential and non-negotiable." The AMSU called on Modi to clarify his position during his state visit and set a timeline for fulfilling the promise.

The protest also criticised Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for indulging in communal politics, which protesters claim hampers the state's development. Student leaders held a meeting at Tinsukia Police Station, Chariali, urging unity within the community.

Facing widespread criticism, Sarma described the police action as "deeply saddening" and ordered a probe. The Officer-in-Charge of Golakganj was suspended, and Minister Jayanta Mallabaruah was sent to Dhubri to meet injured students and engage with community leaders. —*Agencies*

HC bars websites from illegally using Abhisekh's name, pics

NEW DELHI, 12 SEPT

The Delhi High Court has protected the personality rights of Bollywood actor Abhishek Bachchan by restraining several websites and online platforms from illegally using his name or images for commercial gain without his consent.

The high court said it was clear that the attributes of Bachchan's persona, including his name, images and signature, are being misused by the defendant websites and platforms without authorisation from him, by employing technological tools such as artificial intelligence.

The court said use of technology to depict Bachchan in settings that are misleading, derogatory or inappropriate, intrudes upon his privacy, which is aggravated by easily availability of online content.

The court said this unauthorised commercial exploitation directly impacts the economic interests and dignity of the individual concerned.

The court also restrained the defendants from creating, sharing, disseminating any product. It directed Google to remove and disable the URLs given in the application and to file in a sealed cover or password protected document all the "basic subscriber information" of the owners. The Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology and Department of Telecommunications were asked to issue necessary directions to block and disable the URLs. —*PTI*

- The court said use of technology to depict Bachchan in settings that are misleading, derogatory or inappropriate, intrudes upon his privacy as content is easily available.

4 killed, 1 injured as landslide hits Sikkim

GANGTOK/PATIALA, 12 SEPT

In a tragic incident in Sikkim's Gyalshing district, four family members lost their lives and one was critically injured due to a landslide triggered by heavy rainfall.

The landslide struck their home in Upper Rimbi around midnight, with three victims found dead at the scene. Local police and Sashastra Seema Bal personnel, alongside residents, responded swiftly, managing to rescue a seven-year-old boy who was subsequently taken to hospital.

Meanwhile, the recent flooding in the state has severely impacted the state's power infrastructure, with initial losses estimated at Rs 102.58 crore. —*PTI*

'ADDED SPICE TO POST'

SC raps Kangana for post on farmers' protest

NEW DELHI, 12 SEPT

It was not a simple retweet and you had "added spice" to what existed, the Supreme Court on Friday told actor and BJP MP Kangana Ranaut, who withdrew her plea for quashing a defamation complaint over her tweet about a woman protestor during the 2020-21 farmers' protest against the now repealed farm laws.

The court said the tweet or retweet's interpretation couldn't be considered in a quashing petition at least.

Ranaut's counsel told the bench that the actor had retweeted a tweet.

Ranaut had furnished a clarification, which could be given in the quashing proceedings.

The bench said Ranaut may seek exemption from appearance.

The trial court, while issuing summons to her, did not consider her clarification.

The apex court asked whether the petitioner wanted to withdraw the plea, to which the counsel agreed.

Ranaut moved the apex court challenging an order of the Punjab and Haryana High Court which refused to quash the complaint against her.

Mahinder Kaur, 73, who hails from Bahadurgarh Jandian village in Punjab's Bathinda had filed the complaint, claiming the actor made "false imputations and remarks. —*PTI*

Photography banned on SC premises

The Supreme Court has banned clicking photos, creating social media reels and videography within its main premises, declared as a high security zone. Media personnel were asked to conduct interviews and live broadcast of news at the designated lawn area. In case of a violation, the Bar Association shall take appropriate action against the guilty. —*PTI*

SC asks TN filmmaker to apologise

NEW DELHI, 12 SEPT

The Supreme Court on Thursday suggested Tamil film director and politician Seeman to tender an unconditional apology to an actor who lodged a case against him in 2011 alleging rape on the false promise of marriage.

The court heard Seeman's plea challenging a Madras High Court order refusing to quash the case against him.

The high court had directed the police to complete the investigation and file a final report.

Seeman is facing charges for various offences including rape, criminal intimidation and cheating.

The complainant alleged she was in a relationship with Seeman between 2007 and 2011, during which she was sexually exploited and emotionally manipulated.

The complainant's counsel opposed settlement, saying that she had left Tamil Nadu a decade ago. Seeman, called her a sex worker, despite SC granting him interim protection to explore settlement. —*PTI*

Security heightened in J&K's Doda post protests

DODA, 12 SEPT

Security has been significantly heightened in Doda district, Jammu and Kashmir, following violent protests against the arrest of Aam Aadmi Party MLA Mehraj Malik, detained under the Public Safety Act.

Authorities imposed prohibitory restrictions for a fourth consecutive day, leading to the detention of numerous individuals. Malik, apprehended for disturbing public order, is currently held in Kathua jail.

DIG Shridhar Patil stated, "The situation is by and large under control," while acknowledging that about 60-70 individuals were detained, with several released on bonds. Schools have been closed, and internet services are suspended as a precaution.

Malik's father appealed for his release, stating, "I want my son back," while the AAP condemned the government's actions, asserting it will "continue its struggle against injustice." PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti described the situation as disturbing. —*PTI*

Barbed wires placed in view of the protests against the detention of AAP MLA Mehraj Malik in Doda in Jammu and Kashmir on Friday **PHOTO: PTI**

Sediments degrade reservoirs' capacity by over 50%: Study

NEW DELHI, 12 SEPT

An analysis of nearly 370 large reservoirs in India has found that sedimentation from upstream erosion could be reducing storage capacity by more than 50 per cent.

Researchers Uma Madhuri Mogili and Somil Swarnkar from the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Bhopal highlighted "significant regional disparities in sedimentation impacts," with steep terrain and high erosion contributing to the issue.

"Multiple reservoirs exhibit storage capacity losses exceeding 50 per cent, severely undermining their ability to mitigate floods and manage droughts," the study, published in Stochastic Environmental Research and Risk Assessment, stated.

Himalayan region reservoirs suffer the highest yearly storage capacity loss. Reservoirs here could lose 50 per cent of their capacity by 2050. —*PTI*

Bomb scare in Mumbai, Delhi HC

MUMBAI, 12 SEPT

The Bombay High Court and Delhi High Court on Friday received separate e-mails with bomb threats, which created panic and led to suspension of hearings.

The Bombay High Court complex was evacuated and a search operation was launched after the threat was received at its official e-mail, which warned of a bomb blast in the building.

After being informed, police personnel, rushed to the high court and all the judges, lawyers, staff and visitors were asked to vacate the premises as a precautionary measure, an official said.

Various prominent establishments and schools in the city had received similar bomb threats in the recent past.

Meanwhile, a bomb threat spread panic in the Delhi High Court for litigants and judges alike, prompting the latter to rush out of the courtrooms.

The court administration received the threat of bombs being placed in judges' rooms and the court complex, prompting the police and other agencies to launch a search operation.

The e-mail said "as a sample, today's blast in the Delhi High Court will clear the doubts of previous bluffs ...." —*PTI*

Lawyers and people vacate the premises after the Mumbai High court receives a bomb threat via e-mail on Friday **PHOTO: ANI**

- The Bombay High Court complex was evacuated and a search operation was launched after the threat was received at its official e-mail, which warned of a bomb blast in the building.

AFTER BACKLASH

IIT revokes separate seating for non-veg

KOLKATA, 12 SEPT

Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kharagpur has withdrawn a notice that made segregation in seating arrangements in the dining hall of different hostels based on vegetarian and non-vegetarian food habits and choices.

Hinting that the notice about the segregation at BR Ambedkar Hall had been issued without the knowledge of higher authorities, the institute director, Suman Chakraborty, said that it was scrapped following immediate consultation with the higher authority of the institute.

Chakraborty said an academic institution should not impose such an order of segregation based on the food preferences of an individual.

IIT, Kharagpur director Suman Chakraborty said academic institutes should not impose order on segregation based on food preferences **PHOTO: PTI**

On August 16, boarders of the BR Ambedkar Hall of Residence were asked in a notice to take seats based on separately earmarked places for vegetarian and non-vegetarian food.

The boarders criticised the move, drawing support from the alumni, who criticised such segregation as it promoted division.

The institute, in a fresh notice to all hall wardens, directed that any segregation of mess food should be done only at the levels of preparation and distribution.

The director said that notice will be enforced with immediate effect in the dining halls of other hostels where such segretations are in place. —*PTI*

- Hinting that the notice about the segregation at BR Ambedkar Hall had been issued without the knowledge of higher authorities, the institute director, Suman Chakraborty, said that it was scrapped.

OVER 300 LIONS DIED IN GUJARAT JUST IN 2 YEARS: FOREST MINISTER

GANDHINAGAR, 12 SEPT

At least 307 Asiatic lions have died in Gujarat in the past two years, 41 of them from unnatural causes; state Forest Minister Mulubhai Bera informed the legislative assembly on Wednesday.

Replying to a question from AAP MLA Umesh Makwana during Question Hour, Bera said the state government had spent Rs 37.35 crore over the period on measures to curb unnatural deaths. Between August 2023 and July 2024, 141 lions died, and a further 166 deaths were recorded between August 2024 and July 2025.

Unnatural causes claimed 41 lives: 20 lions fell into open wells, nine drowned in other water bodies, two perished in natural calamities, two in road accidents, five were struck by trains and three died from electric shocks.

Steps to protect these animals include setting up of wildlife treatment centers, appointing veterinary doctors, introducing a dedicated ambulance service, building speed-breakers and warning signboards, erecting parapet walls around wells, fencing the railway tracks and radio-collaring lions to monitor their movements. —*PTI*

PRINCE HARRY IN UKRAINE

Britain's Prince Harry arrives in Kyiv, Ukraine, for a surprise visit in support of wounded service members. He met with civilians injured during the war. This marks his second visit to Ukraine since the start of Russia's full-scale invasion. Harry, the founder of the Invictus Games, a Paralympic-style event designed to inspire military veterans recovering from battlefield injuries, uses the visit to highlight the resilience of those affected by war. His appearance in Ukraine follows a four-day trip to the UK, where he meets his father, King Charles III, for the first time in 19 months

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

Kirk's killing flags rising political violence in US

Charlie Kirk, figurehead of the American far right, took a question at a 2023 event in Salt Lake City about the second amendment to the US constitution and gun-related deaths. He answered: "I think it's worth to have a cost of, unfortunately, some gun deaths every single year, so that we can have the second amendment to protect our other God-given rights."

Two years later, once again in Utah, Kirk was killed with a gun. His death comes against a backdrop of increased political violence in the US, driven by a new set of political, societal and technological factors, and its future trajectory will determine the health of American democracy.

Political violence is differentiated from other crimes and it is helpful to have clarity about its particular meaning. It is defined specifically as acts intended to achieve political goals or intimidate opponents through the use of physical force or threats to influence a political outcome or silence dissent.

While most of these incidents come from the far right, violence is used by extremists on both sides.

Over the past decade there has been a dangerous escalation in political violence driven by rage and resentment without clearly defined goals by self-radicalised individuals rather than organised extremist groups.

High profile incidents have dominated headlines. These include the insurrection of 6 January 2021, the shooting at a baseball practice session of Republican members of Congress in 2018, the plot to kidnap Michigan governor, Gretchen Whitmer in 2020, the vicious attack on Paul Pelosi – the husband of the speaker of the House of Representatives – in 2022, the torching of Pennsylvania governor Josh Shapiro's family home in April this year.

And, of course, the assassination attempts on Donald Trump on the campaign trail in 2024.

A teacher from Gurukul school of Art completes artwork to pay tribute to Charlie Kirk in Mumbai ***PHOTO: PTI***

It is shocking yet unsurprising, given the new factors fuelling rage in an already deeply divided society. These can be broadly summarised by three characteristics.

Hyper-partisanship at boiling point

The way politics is discussed today shows that division can't be seen in merely partisan terms. Opponents have become enemies and those with different worldviews have become traitors.

In many examples, pundits, politicians and their mouthpieces indulge in dehumanising rhetoric. Research has consistently found that dehumanisation contributes to a more ready justification of violence.

Indeed, Trump and other high-profile figures have incited violence, even when not actually issuing direct calls to action.

This was most notably evident on 6 January 2021, when Trump goaded supporters in Washington to march on the Capitol, telling them: "And we fight. We fight like hell. And if you don't fight like hell, you're not going to have a country anymore."

Highly influential creators are able to conjure up "bespoke realities" for their followers, generating huge personal wealth from the fomenting of rage and hate. Citizens are consuming deeply flawed, incendiary political content in isolation. This fuels self-radicalisation when people become detached from reality of the world outside their bubble.

Indeed, immediately following the Kirk shooting, social media was already awash with disinformation about liberals celebrating his death and the motivations of the killer before the shooter had been found. Erosion of trust in democracy When faith in government, the justice system, and the electoral process erodes, citizens may come to believe that the established systems are rigged, unresponsive, or illegitimate. This makes traditional avenues for change seem futile.

The American right has long railed against a corrupt and malevolent "deep state" convincing some citizens that democratic norms no longer apply.

What next?

There are three possible scenarios. The worst case is an escalation of violence in both its frequency and its organisation.

The far right has been pushing for strict limits on civil liberties, and the most extreme members may use Kirk's assassination as an excuse for violent retaliation. Widespread civil unrest is a persistent threat, particularly approaching the 2026 midterm elections.

Many fear that if Trump's allies sense they can use escalating disorder to declare an emergency suspension of democratic processes, they will push him to do so.

More likely, but no less unsettling, is a stagnation in which political violence becomes a normalised feature of American political life without escalating to an existential crisis.

This has potentially far-reaching consequences as more moderate politicians on both sides perceive the risks of being in public life to be too high and vacate their offices.

This paves the way for more extreme candidates to fill the gaps.

With the more moderate voices gone, it's less likely the conversation will cool down.

But things could improve. It will require bipartisan condemnation of political violence and a reconnecting of politicians to their constituents

Meanwhile social media platforms and the legacy media alike must be held accountable for the tenor and veracity of the content they feed to the public.

And efforts must be made by political elites, the media and the public to rebuild civic trust

America does not need to accept violence as the norm, in fact, it must collectively and consistently reject it. The future of its democracy may depend on it. *—PTI*

SALAR سالار

As world order shifts, will New Zealand join BRICS?

With the old global order in a heightened state of flux, driven by US President Donald Trump's attacks on free trade, international organisations and human rights, small states like New Zealand are having to adjust their foreign policies and hedge their bets.

As long-term economic and diplomatic power shifts towards Asia and the wider Indo-Pacific, alternative multilateral groups are now growing in importance.

Foremost among these is the grouping known as BRICS, a maturing—and potentially dominant—centre of global economic power. Whether New Zealand would consider joining is still moot, but the forum already includes major nations vital to this country's future.

Formed in September 2006 by Brazil, Russia, India and China (the original BRIC), it had its first annual summit in June 2009, with South Africa joining in December 2010 (thus becoming BRICS).

The core strategic logic of BRICS is based on consensus and solidarity, not coercion, and to gain member benefits via collective strength. As then Indian prime minister Manmohan Singh put it in 2009:

We share the vision of inclusive growth and prosperity in the world [... and] we stand for a rule-based, stable and predictable global order.

Having substantial economies, populations, landmasses, and ambitions underpinned this shared goal of a multipolar world, which now seems to be emerging by a different route due to Trump's isolationist "America first" policies.

Strength in numbers

In 2012, motivated by mutual concerns over food and energy security, terrorism and climate change, BRICS members signed the Delhi Declaration, stating:

We envision a future marked by global peace, economic and social progress [... and] strengthened representation of emerging and developing countries in the institutions of global governance.

In 2013, BRICS launched the New Development Bank, designed to progressively reform the world's financial architecture after the global financial crisis of 2008.

Seeking to fund sustainable development and infrastructure projects in developing states, the bank now rivals older Western-based institutions such as the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The rising significance of BRICS has been accelerated by its recent expansion. In 2024, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates all became members, as did Indonesia in 2025.

Argentina had also agreed to join in 2024 but then pulled out due to the election of its US-oriented populist president, Javier Milei.

The expansion saw BRICS' share of global GDP rise to 39 per cent in 2023. Member states now account for 48.5 per cent of the planet's population and 36 per cent of total global territory.

BRICS also accounts for around 72 per cent of the world's reserves of rare earth minerals, 43.6 per cent of global oil production, 36 per cent of natural gas production and 78.2 per cent of coal production.

An alternative, not a choice

Diplomatically, BRICS members pledge to better synchronise their national policies by meeting on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, IMF, World Bank and G20 summits.

Joining such a body provides an attractive way for countries to enhance their trade and diplomatic bandwidth, as well as hedge against US-inspired instability.

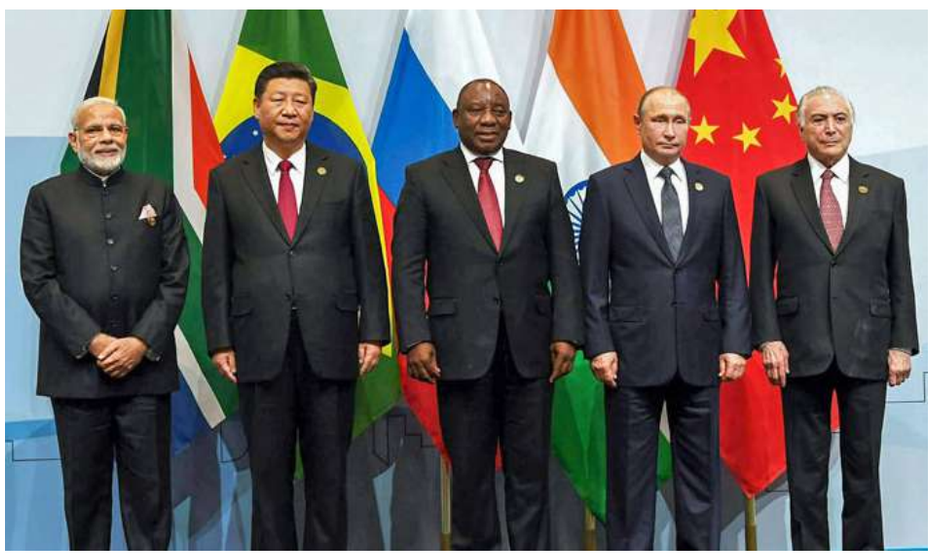
Joining BRICS also comes with potential risks, of course. Any perception of traditional Western alliance systems being undercut could see aid and investment reduced. So far, however, Trump's threat to impose an extra 10 per cent trade tariff on any countries aligned with BRICS has yet to materialise.

Given the current geopolitical situation, New Zealand may well baulk at closer ties with Russia and Iran. But being inside the forum would also allow diplomatic opportunities to press other member states over their actions or policies.

In fact, New Zealand – along with many US allies – joined the Beijing-inspired Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank and signed a Free Trade Agreement with China in 2008. It didn't suffer any adverse consequences. New BRICS members can be invited or make a formal request to apply, which is then considered at the next BRICS annual summit. Or they can apply to be a partner country, which is akin to "observer" status.

This allows them to take part in special summits and foreign minister meetings, as well as contribute to official documents and policy statements. But they can't host meetings or select new members and partners.

Most importantly, joining BRICS would not mean New Zealand needs to leave other multilateral institutions. Rather, it would be a pragmatic way for Wellington to spread its diplomatic wings and prepare for a future in which Asia and the Indo-Pacific – already the world's largest economic and military region – will only become more powerful. *—PTI*



The BRICS includes 10 countries Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Arab Emirates ***PHOTO: PTI***

LETTERS write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

We won't send our sons to die: Moms of Israeli soldiers defy Gaza call-up

As Israel calls up tens of thousands of reservists for its invasion of Gaza City, a growing number of soldiers — and their mothers — are saying no.

There are no official figures, but newly formed groups are broadcasting their refusal to serve despite the risk of imprisonment. It's a new phenomenon in the nearly two-year war sparked by Hamas' 7 October, 2023, attack, though so far it has had no apparent effect on military operations.

The defiance is emerging as Israelis have joined mass protests accusing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of prolonging the war for political purposes instead of reaching a deal with Hamas to bring back the remaining 48 hostages, 20 of whom are believed to be alive.

Many opponents, including former senior security officials, fear that the latest offensive will achieve little and put the hostages at risk. Israel also faces heavy international criticism over the humanitarian catastrophe unleashed by the war and its blockade.

One group calling on soldiers to refuse to serve is comprised of mothers who fear their sons will die in vain.

Avshalom Zohar Sal, a 28-year-old soldier and medic who served multiple tours in Gaza, said soldiers are exhausted, demoralised and no longer know what they are fighting for.

His doubts first surfaced last year, when he was serving in an area near where six hostages were later killed by their captors as Israeli troops closed in. "I felt this was my fault," he said.

His scepticism deepened during his most recent tour, in June, when he saw troops returning to the same areas where they had fought earlier in the war. He said some soldiers seemed less focused, leaving them vulnerable to attacks from a vastly diminished but still lethal Hamas.

"Don't put me in the position that I need to decide if I'm going to risk again my life," he said, addressing the military.

A group known as Soldiers for Hostages says it represents more than 360 soldiers who refuse to serve. While the number remains small, it is a contrast from the early days of the war, when reservists rushed for duty in the wake of the 7 October attack. Such refusal is punishable by imprisonment, but that has only happened in a handful of cases.

"We have to be their voice," said Felsenthal-Berger, whose two sons have fought in Gaza. The group has held protests around the country, met with government officials and published letters. She says her sons, including one on active duty, are no longer in Gaza. She says they support her efforts but have not officially refused to serve.

Israel's call-up of 60,000 reservists is the largest in months, in a country of fewer than 10 million people where military service is mandatory for most Jewish men ***PHOTO: PTI***

Yifat Gadot says her 22-year-old son, who fought in Gaza for nine months at the start of the war, told her that soldiers there felt like sitting ducks. More than 450 Israeli soldiers have been killed since the start of the 2023 ground invasion, according to the army.

Some of the women have encouraged their sons to refuse to report back for action in Gaza, while others say they respect their son's decisions. All say their message is aimed primarily at the country's leaders.

Netanyahu's office declined to comment.

Israel's call-up of 60,000 reservists is the largest in months, in a country of fewer than 10 million people where military service is mandatory for most Jewish men. Many have already served multiple tours away from their families and businesses.

The Israeli government's failure to draft ultra-Orthodox men into the military has added to their anger. Religious men have long avoided military service through exemptions negotiated by their politically powerful leaders, who have been a key component of Netanyahu's government. That has fuelled resentment among the broader public — a sentiment that has grown during nearly two years of war.

The military does not provide figures on absences or refusals and says each case is evaluated on its merits.

At least three soldiers associated with the Soldiers for Hostages group have been imprisoned this year for refusing to serve, with some jailed for up to three weeks, the group said.

Support for the war ran high after Hamas-led militants attacked southern Israel on Oct 7, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducting 251.

But sentiment has changed over the course of the war, especially since Israel ended a ceasefire in March that had facilitated the release of hostages.

The war has killed more than 64,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

Hamas has long said it would accept a deal along those lines, but Netanyahu has refused. He has said the war will end only when all the hostages are returned and Hamas is disarmed, with Israel maintaining open-ended security control over the territory.

Mairav Zonszein, a senior analyst with the International Crisis Group, said that pushing soldiers in a deeply divided country to keep fighting could have a lasting impact on Israel's capabilities.

Many believe that divisions over a planned judicial overhaul in 2023, which generated mass protests and threats from soldiers not to serve, weakened Israel ahead of the 7 October attack.

Still, refusing military service remains a red line for many in Israel. *—PTI*

PHOTO: X

US Naval Academy locked down after threat

ANNAPOLIS, 12 SEPT

The United States Naval Academy in Maryland was put on a lockdown on Thursday and a building was cleared in response to reports of threats made to the military school. Officials said one person was injured in the melee. The injured person was airlifted to a hospital and is in a stable condition, Lt. Naweed Lemar, the spokesperson for the base that hosts the academy, said in a statement. Naval Support Activity Annapolis security and local law enforcement had responded to the reports of suspicious activity, Lemar said. Additional details about the threat and how the person was injured were not immediately available. *—PTI*

World-first koala vaccine approved in Australia

MELBOURNE, 12 SEPT

Australia has approved a world-first single-dose vaccine to protect endangered koalas from chlamydia, a disease causing infertility and death. Developed by the University of the Sunshine Coast over ten years, the vaccine reduces symptoms during breeding age and cuts mortality by at least 65 per cent. It can now be used in the wild and in clinics. However, Australian Koala Foundation chair DeborahTabart criticised the plan, calling it impractical and urging focus on habitat protection. While welcomed by conservationists, experts stress koalas remain at risk due to deforestation. Wild koala numbers are estimated between 100,000 and 524,000, with extinction possible by 2050. The government supported the vaccine through a AUD76 million Saving Koalas Fund. *—PTI*

S Korean workers return home after detention in US

INCHEON, 12 SEPT

A plane carrying more than 300 South Korean workers released after days of detention in Georgia landed in South Korea on Friday. TV footage showed the charter plane, a Boeing 747-8i from Korean Air, landing in Incheon International Airport, just west of Seoul, on Friday. The footage later showed workers, some wearing masks, passing an arrival hall, with senior officials clapping hands. The workers were among about 475 people detained during the 4 September immigration raid at a battery factory under construction on the campus of Hyundai's sprawling auto plant west of Savannah. The US release of video showing some Korean workers shackled with chains around their hands, ankles and waists has caused public outrage and a sense of betrayal in South Korea, a key US ally. *—PTI*

Lebanon licenses Musk's Starlink for satellite internet

BEIRUT, 12 SEPT

Lebanon has granted a licence to Elon Musk's Starlink to provide satellite internet services across the country, Information Minister Paul Morcos announced Thursday. Starlink, operated by Musk's SpaceX, will help improve internet access in Lebanon, a nation struggling with crumbling infrastructure. The licence follows a phone call between Musk and President Joseph Aoun nearly three months ago, where Musk expressed interest in Lebanon's telecommunications sector. During the same Cabinet meeting, authorities named regulators for the electricity and telecommunications sectors—long-delayed reforms demanded by international organisations. Lebanon's electricity sector is notorious for corruption and inefficiency, with the state-run Electricite du Liban wasting over $1 billion annually. *—PTI*

The protests have ended, and a new interim head has been elected in Nepal — but will the dead return to their grieving families? The price of the revolt was paid by the young protesters, whose families cannot stop crying, even as the nation celebrates the triumph of the uprising. In photos from Kathmandu on Friday, we see the families of an unnamed youth and 23-year-old Roshan Neupane mourning before the last rites **PHOTO: PTI**

Nepal eases exit rules for foreigners

Civilians claims conspiracy to restore monarchy

KATHMANDU, 12 SEPT

- Police forces in the Kathmandu Valley have slowly resumed duties following the unrest. Many vandalised police posts are being reopened with help from locals.

Nepal has announced temporary visa and exit relaxations for foreign nationals stranded due to the ongoing curfew in the Kathmandu Valley, while police operations are gradually resuming after widespread unrest.

According to immigration officials, international travellers whose visas were valid through 8 September can now regularise their visas and obtain exit permits without extra fees. This facility is available at both immigration offices and departure points.

For those who lost their passports during recent disturbances, visa transfers will be allowed to emergency travel documents issued by embassies, under existing rules. The government has also enabled visa transfers to new passports to ensure smooth departure.

Currently, a prohibitory order remains in place in Kathmandu from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm, with a curfew enforced from 7:00 pm Friday to 6:00 am Saturday.

Meanwhile, civil society group Brihat Nagarik Andolan (BNA) has alleged a "reactionary conspiracy" is being orchestrated "under military mediation" to restore monarchy and roll back Nepal's secular, federal, and inclusive system.

The group condemned the growing influence of the Nepal Army, which has taken charge of national security, and warned against the erosion of constitutional democracy. It called for any new government to be rooted in the Constitution and committed to transparency and reform.

Separately, police forces in the Kathmandu Valley have slowly resumed duties following the unrest. Many vandalised police posts are being reopened with help from local communities, officials said.

Personnel from Nepal Police and Armed Police Force have returned to the streets and are operating with limited resources. Several police officers had earlier taken shelter in army barracks after facing violent attacks.

Security remains tight across the Valley. *—PTI*

WAS ASSOCIATED TO A MINISTER

Kirk suspect turned in by 'somebody close to him'

OREM, 12 SEPT

US President Donald Trump revealed today that the suspect in the killing of conservative activist Charlie Kirk was turned in by someone very close to him, a minister involved in law enforcement. "Somebody that was very close to him said, 'Hmm, that's him,'" Trump stated.

Kirk, co-founder of the political youth organisation Turning Point USA and a prominent Trump ally, was shot and killed Wednesday in what Utah's governor has labelled a political assassination. The fatal shot was fired during an outdoor event where Kirk was addressing a crowd. Videos show him speaking into a handheld microphone when a single shot rang out.

Authorities believe the shooter, who appeared college-aged, blended into the campus crowd and fired one shot from a rooftop. FBI agent Robert Bohls confirmed it was a "targeted event." Surveillance footage later showed the suspect walking through grass and crossing a street before disappearing.

Trump, joined by Democrats in condemning the killing, announced Kirk would be posthumously awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honour in the US.

Vice President JD Vance, a longtime friend of Kirk, helped carry the casket alongside his wife Usha and Kirk's widow Erika in Phoenix. The Vice President also paid tribute on X, highlighting Kirk's role in the administration's success: "He didn't just help us win in 2024; he helped us staff the entire government."

Kirk's casket was flown aboard Air Force Two from Utah to Phoenix, where Turning Point USA is based. Trump confirmed he plans to attend the funeral. *—PTI*

US Vice President JD Vance carries the casket of Charlie Kirk in Phoenix, Arizona **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

Black colleges shut down after threats

Historically Black colleges and universities across the US issued lockdowns, cancelled classes, and heightened security on Thursday after receiving threats. Southern University, Alabama State, Clark Atlanta, Hampton, and others were affected. Some institutions not directly targeted also increased precautions.

Secret Service worker sent on leave

A member of the US Secret Service has been placed on leave for allegedly mocking Kirk's death on social media and referring to it as "karma." Anthony Pough in a Facebook Post claimed in the post that Kirk "spewed hate and racism" and that "you can only circumvent karma, she doesn't leave."

Trump seeks emergency removal of Fed's Lisa Cook

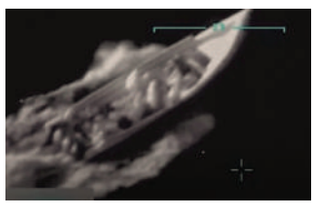
The Trump administration has requested an emergency appeals court ruling to remove Lisa Cook from the Federal Reserve board by Monday, ahead of its interest rate vote. Trump attempted to fire Cook on 25 August over alleged mortgage fraud, but a judge ruled the dismissal illegal.

Trump accused of using AI for Kirk's tribute

A video of Trump paying tribute to Kirk has sparked claims of AI use after viewers noticed glitches, including a disappearing pinky and odd mouth movements. Social media users questioned the video's authenticity, with one writing: "That Trump speech was AI."

People killed in US boat strike were not gang members: Venezuela

WASHINGTON, 12 SEPT



In Venezuela, Interior Minister Diosdado Cabello on Thursday accused the US government of murder **PHOTO: PTI**

The US military strike on what the Trump administration says was a drug-carrying speedboat from Venezuela came after the vessel had turned around and was heading back to shore, raising fresh questions from members of the Congress demanding more information about the provocative attack.

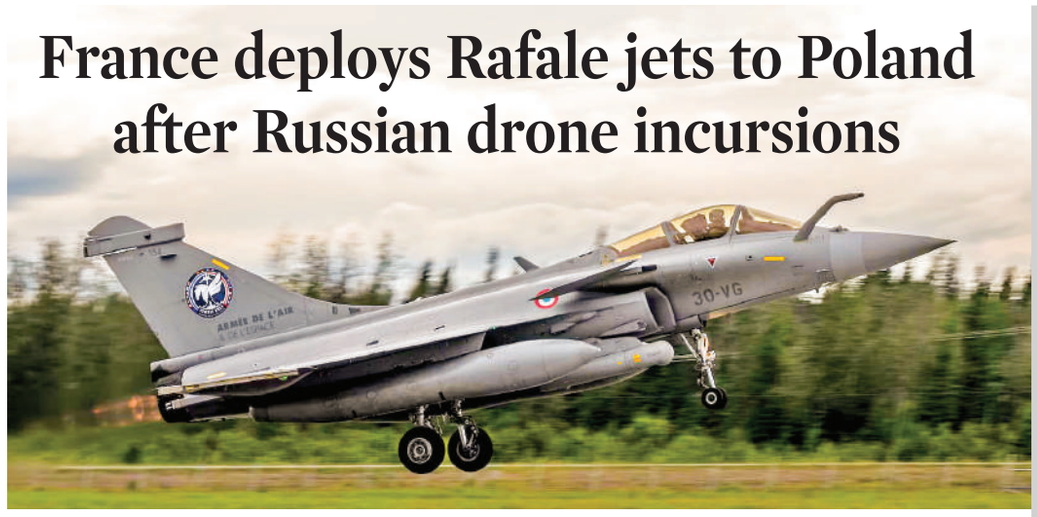
National security officials acknowledged during a closed briefing this week on Capitol Hill that the boat carrying 11 people, described by the Trump administration as Tren de Aragua gang members, was fired on multiple times by the US military earlier this month after it had changed course, according to two people familiar with the situation who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the private meeting.

The emerging details come as the Trump administration justified the military strike, but several senators, Democrats and some Republicans, have indicated dissatisfaction with the administration's rationale and questioned the legality of the action. They view it as a potential overreach of executive authority in part by using the military for law enforcement purposes.

Democrats contest legal reasoning for the strike. In a letter to the White House, Sen. Tim Kaine of Virginia and two dozen other Democratic senators said the Trump administration has provided "no legitimate legal justification" for the strike.

In Venezuela, Interior Minister Diosdado Cabello on Thursday accused the US government of murder, characterised its version of events as "a tremendous lie" and questioned how the people on board the targeted vessel were linked to the gang. *—PTI*

France deploys Rafale jets to Poland after Russian drone incursions



PARIS 12 SEPT

French President Emmanuel Macron on Thursday announced the deployment of three Rafale fighter jets to Poland in response to recent Russian drone incursions, saying the move was aimed at strengthening NATO's eastern flank and protecting European security.

In a post on X, Macron said, "Following the Russian drone incursions into Poland, I have decided to deploy three Rafale fighter jets to contribute to the protection of Polish airspace and of NATO's Eastern Flank together with our Allies."

The French leader said he had conveyed this decision directly to Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk on Wednesday. He also discussed the matter with NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg and British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, who Macron noted was "likewise engaged in the defence of the Eastern Flank."

The French announcement came after Poland's military said it shot down Russian drones that had crossed into its airspace during strikes on Ukraine earlier this week. Warsaw has since invoked NATO's Article 4, calling for consultations among allies on the threat.

Macron stressed that defending Europe against Russian actions remains central to French and NATO strategy. "The security of the European continent is our top priority," he said, adding, "We will not yield to Russia's growing intimidation." The move marks one of France's most direct military contributions to NATO air defence in Eastern Europe since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine began in 2022.

Russia and Belarus launch joint military

Russia and Belarus began the long-planned "Zapad 2025" military exercise Friday, involving thousands of troops.

Held across Belarus and Russia until 16 September, the drills aim to showcase their close defence ties and Russia's military strength amid the ongoing war in Ukraine. *—ANI*

Russia says Ukraine talks are paused

The Kremlin said Friday that peace talks between Russia and Ukraine were on "pause" as US President Donald Trump's efforts to end the three-and-a-half-year conflict falter.

Pushing for a deal to end the fighting, Trump has engaged in a flurry of diplomacy, including hosting Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin in Alask, but Moscow has pressed on with its offensive and aerial barrages. "You can't wear rose-tinted glasses and expect that the negotiation process will yield immediate results," Russia said.

TO COMBAT CORRUPTION

In a 1st, AI bot takes over as 'minister' in Albania

TIRANA, 12 SEPT

Diella, the world's first AI minister **PHOTO: SCREENGRAB**

Albania's Prime Minister Edi Rama has announced that his new cabinet will include an artificial intelligence "minister" named Diella, tasked with managing public funding projects and combating corruption in public tenders. Diella, meaning "Sun" in Albanian, is a virtual AI member of the cabinet and will operate remotely.

Launched earlier this year on the e-Albania public service platform, Diella assists users navigating the site, often depicted in traditional Albanian folk costume. Rama emphasised that Diella will help ensure public tenders are "100 per cent free of corruption," a major issue in Albania since the fall of communism in 1990.

Rama's Socialist Party won a fourth consecutive term in May, securing 83 of 140 parliamentary seats. While the party can govern alone, it needs a two-thirds majority (93 seats) to amend the Constitution. The Socialists have promised to deliver EU membership within five years, aiming to conclude negotiations by 2027—a claim met with scepticism by the opposition Democratic Party-led coalition, which won 50 seats and disputes the election results.

So far, Diella has helped issue 36,600 digital documents and provided nearly 1,000 services through the e-Albania platform. Legal experts suggest further steps may be needed to formalise Diella's ministerial status.

Corruption, particularly linked to the awarding of public tenders, has long plagued Albania, a nation of 2.8 million and a known hub for criminal gangs involved in drug and weapons trafficking. *—PTI*

China's newest aircraft sails through Taiwan Strait

BEIJING, 12 SEPT

China's newest aircraft carrier, Fujian, has sailed through the Taiwan Strait for the first time, the navy confirmed Friday. The strait separates China from self-governing Taiwan, which Beijing claims as its territory. While the move could be seen as a warning to the US and its allies, China downplayed any provocative intent.

The Fujian, currently undergoing sea trials ahead of commissioning, was en route to the South China Sea for training and scientific research. A navy statement said the activities were not directed at any third party, and a state media-linked source described the Taiwan Strait as the most efficient route. The US, along with allies like Canada and Australia, regularly sails warships through the strait in defiance of China's territorial claims. Beijing recently accused Canadian and Australian vessels of provocative actions. *—PTI*

SC sends Bolsonaro to jail for 27yrs for coup attempt

BRASILIA, 12 SEPT

A panel of Brazil's Supreme Court justices sentenced former president Jair Bolsonaro to 27 years and three months in prison on Thursday, convicting him of attempting a coup to remain in power despite his 2022 electoral defeat. Bolsonaro, currently under house arrest in Brasilia, can appeal the verdict.

Four of the five justices reviewing the case found Bolsonaro guilty on five counts. The ruling deepens po-litical divisions in Brazil and is expected to provoke a backlash from the United States. US President Don-ald Trump, speaking as he left the White House, expressed being "very unhappy" with the conviction and praised Bolsonaro as "outstanding."

The panel's decision came after Justice Cármen Lúcia voted to convict Bolsonaro, while Justice Luiz Fux dissented, voting to acquit him of all charges. One justice's vote is still pending. Once all five justices have voted, the panel will determine Bolsonaro's final sentence, which could mean decades behind bars.

Bolsonaro, 70, denies wrongdoing and has not appeared in court, sending lawyers to represent him. His legal team plans to appeal the ruling to the full 11-member Supreme Court.

The trial has divided Brazilian society, with supporters rallying in Bolsonaro's defence while others back the judicial process. The case drew renewed international attention after Trump linked a proposed 50 per cent tariff on Brazilian imports to Bolsonaro's legal troubles, calling the trial a "witch hunt." Experts warn the US may impose further sanctions on Brazil, potentially worsening bilateral relations. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Rupee up from all-time low to 88.28 against USD

MUMBAI, 12 SEPT

The Indian rupee recovered from all-time lows and settled for the day higher by 7 paise at 88.28 (provisional) against the US dollar on Friday, on weakness in the US dollar index and positive domestic markets. Forex traders said the domestic unit traded in a tight range and hovered around its all-time low level as tariff-led pressure on India's exports and sustained foreign fund outflows dented investors sentiments. At the interbank foreign exchange, the domestic unit opened at 88.39 and fell to an intraday low of 88.42 against the US dollar during the session. The domestic unit settled for the day at 88.28 (provisional), recovering 7 paise over its previous close. The USD-INR spot price is expected to trade in a range of 88 to 88.50, he said. *—PTI*

Semiconductor chip firm eyes Rs 1,500 cr in 1yr

AHMEDABAD, 12 SEPT

Nextgen Semiconductors has announced its intention to establish a chip manufacturing facility in Dholera, Gujarat, with plans to raise between Rs 1,000 crore to Rs 1,500 crore through equity and other financial instruments over the next 12 months. The firm aims to invest more than Rs 8,800 crore in phases to build a fully integrated Silicon (Si) and Silicon Carbide (SiC) power semiconductor platform. "The company plans to raise around Rs 1,000 crore to Rs 1,500 crore over the next 12 months via a mix of equity and structured instruments," Nextgen stated. The facility, backed by global and Indian investors, plans to commence work in April 2026, with commissioning expected within 15 months. *—PTI*

Coal India raises workers' ex gratia to Rs 25 lakh

RANCHI, 12 SEPT

Union Coal Minister G Kishan Reddy announced that Coal India Ltd (CIL) will increase the ex gratia payment for workers involved in mine accidents from Rs 15 lakh to Rs 25 lakh, starting 17September, coinciding with Vishwakarma Diwas and PM Narendra Modi's birthday. In a decision, CIL will also introduce uniforms for all employees, including the Chairman and Managing Director, for first time since Independence. He stated, "This initiative aims to ensure a culture of discipline and unity." He revealed additional accidental insurance of Rs 1 crore for employees and Rs 40 lakh for contractual workers, as part of government's commitment to enhance safety and reduce coal imports. *—PTI*

TCS, C-DAC partner for sovereign cloud ecosystem

NEW DELHI, 12 SEPT

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) on Friday said it has signed a pact with the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) to drive and scale the development of India's sovereign cloud ecosystem. The collaboration will focus on research to develop indigenous technologies and deliver scalable, AI-enabled cloud platforms that align with India's data localisation mandates and support the digitisation of critical public sector services, the company said in a regulatory filing. The partnership will enable faster enterprise adoption by improving security, compliance, and performance across key sectors. It aims to reduce dependence on global hyperscalers by creating a future-ready sovereign cloud ecosystem based on OpenStack and indigenous technologies. *—PTI*

Inflation rises to 2.07% in Aug on costly kitchen items

The annual food inflation in August 2025 was -0.69 per cent, according to the data released by the National Statistics Office (NSO) **PHOTO: PTI**

NEW DELHI, 12 SEPT

Retail inflation inched up to 2.07 per cent in August from 1.61 per cent in the preceding month, driven by a rise in prices of kitchen items, like vegetables, meat, fish, and eggs, according to government data released on Friday.

The rise in inflation comes after a continuous fall in the consumer price index (CPI) for nine months. It was in decline since November 2024.

The inflation was 3.65 per cent in August 2024.

The annual food inflation in August 2025 was -0.69 per cent, according to the data released by the National Statistics Office (NSO).

- Among states, the highest inflation was in Kerala at 9.04 per cent and the lowest in Assam (-0.66 per cent)

"An increase in headline inflation and food inflation during the month of August 2025 is mainly attributed to an increase in inflation of vegetables, meat and fish, oil and fats, personal care and eggs," NSO said.

The Reserve Bank has been mandated by the government to ensure inflation remains at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side.

The inflation in rural India increased to 1.69 per cent in August from 1.18 per cent in July. In urban parts of the country, it was 2.47 per cent compared to 2.1 per cent sequentially.

Among states, the highest inflation was in Kerala at 9.04 per cent and the lowest in Assam (-0.66 per cent).

The Reserve Bank mainly factors in the retail inflation while arriving at its bi-monthly monetary policy.

Commenting on the data, Icra Chief Economist Aditi Nayar said the sequential uptick in year-on-year CPI inflation in August 2025 was largely driven by the food and beverage segment, which was flat compared to the year-old levels, after witnessing a deflation in each of the last two months.

Core inflation inched up marginally to 4.3 per cent in August 2025 from 4.2 per cent in the previous month, while remaining similar to the range seen during the last seven months, she said. *—PTI*

Sebi eases IPO rules for very large companies

This is expected to benefit mega IPOs like Reliance & NSE

MUMBAI, 12 SEPT

Stock market regulator Sebi on Friday decided to relax initial public offering (IPO) rules for very large companies and also extend the timeline by up to 10 years for them to meet minimum public shareholding norms.

The move is expected to benefit mega IPOs including that of Reliance Jio Infocomm and the National Stock Exchange (NSE).

The new framework, if implemented, would reduce the immediate dilution burden while still ensuring gradual compliance with public shareholding norms.

Under the new framework, companies with a market capitalisation between Rs 50,000 crore and Rs 1 lakh crore, would be required to float 8 per cent of their equity instead of the current 10 per cent. Such firms would also get a timeline of five years instead of the present three years for achieving minimum public shareholding (MPS) requirement of 25 per cent.

The new framework, would reduce immediate dilution burden while still ensuring gradual compliance with public shareholding norms **PHOTO: PTI**

For companies with a market capitalisation above Rs 1 lakh crore, mandatory offer requirements would be reduced to 2.75 per cent from the current 5 per cent, while those above Rs 5 lakh crore would need to dilute only 2.5 per cent.

Such large companies would also be given up to 10 years to achieve the 25 per cent minimum public shareholding requirement, compared with five years at present.

This means companies can list with smaller IPOs initially, while gradually increasing their public shareholding over a longer period, reducing the immediate burden of large-scale equity dilution.

It is expected to help large issues, which often find it challenging to dilute substantial stakes through an IPO, as the market may not be able to absorb such a large supply of shares.

The regulator noted that for large size companies, the revised minimum public offer will still be large enough to provide sufficient stock to the market, including retail investors, and facilitate liquidity.

In view of the revised MPO proposal, Sebi said that there is no further proposal to reduce allocation to retail investors in IPO size exceeding Rs 5,000 crore from 35 per cent to 25 per cent. *—PTI*

Sensex jumps by 355.97 points

MUMBAI, 12 SEPT

Equity benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty surged on Friday in line with a global market rally amid rising hopes that the US Federal Reserve will cut interest rates next week.

Optimism over a successful conclusion of India-US trade talks has also fuelled a rally in markets.

Rallying for the fifth day in a row, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 355.97 points or 0.44 per cent to settle at 81,904.70. During the day, it surged 444.12 points or 0.54 per cent to 81,992.85.

The 50-share NSE Nifty rallied 108.50 points or 0.43 per cent to 25,114, registering its eighth straight day of uptrend.

On the weekly front, the BSE benchmark jumped 1,193.94 points or 1.47 per cent, and the Nifty climbed 373 points or 1.50 per cent. In eight trading days, the Nifty has jumped 534.4 points or 2.17 per cent.

NSE Nifty rallied 108.50 points or 0.43 per cent to 25,114 **PHOTO: PTI**

From the Sensex firms, Bharat Electronics, Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Finserv, Axis Bank, Maruti and Tata Motors were among the gainers.

However, Eternal, Hindustan Unilever, Trent and Titan were the major laggards.

The BSE smallcap gauge climbed 0.27 per cent, and the midcap went up marginally by 0.09 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, capital goods jumped 1.76 per cent, industrials (1.28 per cent), telecommunication (0.88 per cent), BSE utilities (0.53 per cent), power (0.44 per cent) and BSE Focused IT (0.36 per cent).

Consumer Discretionary, FMCG, consumer durables, oil & gas were the laggards. *—PTI*

Urban Company's IPO subscribed 103.63 times

NEW DELHI, 12 SEPT

The initial public offer of app-based beauty and home services platform Urban Company Ltd received overwhelming investor participation, with the issue getting a huge 103.63 times subscription on the last day of bidding on Friday.

The Rs 1,900-crore IPO received bids for 11,06,46,08,960 shares against 10,67,73,244 shares on offer, according to NSE data.

The category for Qualified Institutional Buyers (QIBs) got subscribed 140.20 times. The portion for non-institutional investors fetched 74.04 times subscription, while the Retail Individual Investors (RIIs) part received 39.25 times subscription.

Urban Company on Tuesday raised Rs 854 crore from anchor investors.

The company's Initial Public Offering (IPO) has a price band of Rs 98-103 per share.

At the upper end of the price band, the company's valuation is pegged at Rs 14,790 crore.

The company plans to use funds raised through the fresh issuance for new technology development and cloud infrastructure, lease payments for its offices, marketing activities, and general corporate purposes. *—PTI*

Govt mulls incentives for rare earth mineral

NEW DELHI, 12 SEPT

The Indian government is set to introduce fiscal incentives to bolster domestic production of rare earth magnets, following supply disruptions largely influenced by China, according to Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy. The Heavy Industries and Steel Minister announced plans for a scheme that will offer "targeted support" for both capital and operational expenditure in the industry, helping to bridge cost gaps and alleviate high tariffs on critical equipment.

In July, the minister mentioned that inter-ministerial consultations were underway for a Rs 1,345-crore scheme to subsidise rare earth magnet production, incentivising two manufacturers. This initiative aims to establish processing facilities for converting rare earth oxides into magnets.

Rare earth magnets, particularly neodymium-iron-boron, are vital for high-performance automotive applications, and electric vehicles. *—PTI*

UK Parl panel examines impact of FTA with India

LONDON, 12 SEPT

The House of Lords International Agreements Committee has opened an inquiry into the UK-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA) concluded during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to the UK in July.

The cross-party panel, which includes British Indian Conservative peer Baroness Sandy Verma, is seeking evidence from experts and stakeholders before the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) can come into force.

The government aims to double bilateral trade to USD 120B by 2030, with the agreement expected to boost trade by £25.5B and increase UK GDP by £4.8B annually over time.

Lord Peter Goldsmith, committee chair, said the inquiry will examine the FTA's benefits and risks, its impact on key sectors, consumers, the wider economy, and UK-India relationship, as well as social, environmental, and geopolitical implications.

The public can submit written evidence until 14 October, after which selected individuals and trade representatives will be invited to give oral evidence. *—PTI*

WORTH RS 18,000 CRORE

Shares of the company went up by 2.32 per cent to Rs 1,544.65 on the BSE **PHOTO: PTI**

Infosys stock up by 2% after record share buyback plan

NEW DELHI, 12 SEPT

The stock of Infosys climbed over 2 per cent on Friday morning trade after the IT services giant said its board has approved the largest-ever share buyback programme worth Rs 18,000 crore.

Shares of the company went up by 2.32 per cent to Rs 1,544.65 on the BSE.

At the NSE, the stock climbed 2.19 per cent to Rs 1,542.90.

Infosys will buy 10 crore fully paid-up equity shares of a face value of Rs 5 each, representing up to 2.41 per cent of the total paid-up equity share capital, at Rs 1,800 per share, which reflects a premium of around 19 per cent over Thursday's closing price of Rs 1,509.5 apiece on BSE.

"The Board of Directors of the company at their meeting held on September 11, 2025, has considered and approved a proposal to buyback equity shares for an amount of Rs 18,000 crore at a price of Rs 1,800 per equity share," Infosys said in an exchange filing.

At the end of June 2025 quarter, the company had reported a free cash flow of USD 884 million (around Rs 7,805 crore).

With this, Infosys matches the biggest ever share buyback programme of IT major TCS announced in 2022. TCS had then bought back 4 crore equity shares at a price of Rs 4,500 per equity share for an aggregate consideration of Rs 18,000 crore.

Infosys will now seek shareholder's approval for going ahead with the buyback programme. *—PTI*

Gold up by ₹1.13L/10g, silver crosses ₹1.32L/kg

NEW DELHI, 12 SEPT

Gold and silver prices hit fresh peaks on Friday, with the yellow metal hitting Rs 1,13,800 per 10g, and silver crossing Rs 1,32,000 per kilogram in the national capital, buoyed by strong global demand and heightened expectations of an interest rate cut by the US Federal Reserve next week.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the precious metal of 99.9 per cent purity extended gains for the fourth straight session by jumping Rs 700 to hit a record high of Rs 1,13,800 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes).

In the local bullion markets, gold of 99.5 per cent purity climbed Rs 700 to Rs 1,13,300 per 10g (inclusive of all taxes), marking its lifetime peak on Friday.

It had settled at Rs 1,12,600 per 10g on Thursday.

Meanwhile, silver staged a sharp rebound, snapping its two-day losing streak with a jump of Rs 4,000 to hit an all-time high of Rs 1,32,000 per kilogram.

The white metal had closed at Rs 1,28,000 per kg as demand remained robust in physical and investment segments, as per the Association.

Spot gold increased by USD 12.69, or 0.35 per cent, to USD 3,646.69 per ounce. *—PTI*

'BLATANT VIOLATION'

Adani Ports bars vessels facing sanctions from US, UK and EU

NEW DELHI, 12 SEPT

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd. announced that it will bar vessels sanctioned by the US, UK, UN, or EU, according to sources aware of the matter.

Sources said that the companies, through notice informed their shipowners, operators, charterers, and other port users to ensure compliance on the strict international sanctions lawas and frameworks.

This move is to protect the port's legal and commercial interests, said sources.

The Adani Group did not give an immediate reply to the queries, it said.

According to sources, the decision follows sanctions aiming at 'shadow fleets' which are transporting Russian oil and US' extra 25 per cent tariff on India for Russian oil imports.

Cong alleges FRA violations

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh on Friday alleged that the Adani Group has begun cutting trees on government and forest land for its coal mine project in Madhya Pradesh's Dhirauli in "blatant violation" of the Forest Rights Act. The state government, however, rejected the allegation as baseless.

The former environment minister also claimed that the Modi government imposed this allotment from above in 2019, and is now rushing ahead with it in 2025 without the essential legal clearances.

There was no immediate reaction from the Adani Group or the Centre to the charges, but the Madhya Pradesh government claimed that the project was granted final approval by the environment ministry. *—Agencies*

'Trump policies self-destructive'

HYDERABAD, 12 SEPT

Former Reserve Bank of India Governor C Rangarajan on Friday described certain economic policies of US President Donald Trump as "self-destructive" and said they had effectively brought global trade to a standstill. Speaking at the 15th Convocation of the ICFAI Foundation for Higher Education, Rangarajan, without directly mentioning BRICS, noted that the rise of regional economic blocs with freer trade is inevitable, but stressed that the ultimate goal should be a unified world with open trade.

"The world today is in flux. The pursuit of certain economic policies by President Trump has halted world trade. Hopefully, good sense will prevail and US policymakers will recognise that their approach is self-defeating. India has been among the worst affected," he added. *—PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Teenager Gatha falls to Olympic champion Lim

GWANGJU, 12 SEPT

India's long wait for a world medal in recurve archery stretched further as 15-year-old Gatha Khadake, the country's last hope, went down fighting to world No. 1 Lim Si-hyeon in the pre-quarterfinals, ending the campaign in the Olympic discipline at the World Championships, here on Friday. Before Gatha could even settle into the contest, it was all over in a blink as the Korean, a triple gold medallist from the Paris Olympics, sealed the match 6-0 without breaking a sweat playing in front of the home crowd. Yet, despite the one-sided scoreline, the teenager's fearless run to the pre-quarters on debut at the Worlds offers hope for the future in a discipline where India have consistently flattered to deceive. India last won a recurve medal at the Worlds in 2019.—*PTI*

ISSF World Cup: Mehuli, Manini fail to impress

NINGBO, 12 SEPT

World Championship bronze-medallist shooter Mehuli Ghosh and well-known rifle exponent Manini Kaushi failed to get India's campaign going in the ISSF World Cup, finishing dismally in the women's 50m rifle 3 positions event here on Friday. Mehuli, who had secured a Paris Olympic quota place but had missed out on the quadrennial showpiece after being beaten in the national trials last year, shot 583 in the qualification round to finish 23rd, while Manini ended up 45th with a score of 580 in a field of 66 shooters. The third Indian in the fray, Surabhi Bharadwaj, shot a forgettable 578 to finish 52nd.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Neeraj aims to defend gold in World C'ships

TOKYO, 12 SEPT

Neeraj Chopra will aim to become only the third men's javelin thrower in history to defend the World Championships gold as he carries the country's weight of expectations on his broad shoulders as the lone Indian medal prospect in the athletics showpiece beginning here on Saturday. Chopra had won gold in the 2023 edition in Budapest with a throw of 88.17m, while Pakistan's reigning Olympic champion Arshad Nadeem (87.82m) and the Czech Republic's Jakub Vadlejch (86.67m) had pocketed silver and bronze, respectively. If the two-time Olympic medallist Indian wins gold on 18 Sep, the day of the finals, he will become the third man ever to win the world championships—*PTI*

Madrid to Host 2027 Champions League final

SYDNEY, 12 SEPT

The 2027 Champions League final will be played at the Metropolitano Stadium in Madrid, European football's governing body UEFA announced on Thursday night. It will be the second time that Atletico Madrid's home stadium has hosted the final of Europe's elite club competition after Liverpool beat Tottenham Hotspur there in 2019. Azerbaijan's capital, Baku, had been the other candidate to host next season's showpiece game, but UEFA opted for the Spanish capital following a meeting of its executive committee in Tirana., This season's Champions League final will take place in Budapest on 30 May.—*PTI*

Lakshya, Satwik-Chirag enter SFs of Hong Kong Open

Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty PHOTO: X/@HOPEN

HONG KONG, 12 SEPT

Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen and the pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty sailed into the semifinals of their respective events at the Hong Kong Open Super 500 badminton tournament here on Friday.

Sen got the better of compatriot Ayush 21-16, 17-21, 21-13 in a hard-fought men's singles quarterfinal contest that lasted one hour and six minutes.

Rising Indian shuttler Ayush had caused a major upset on Thursday, ousting 2023 World Championships silver medallist Kodai Naraoka of Japan in a hard-fought three-game contest.

Sen will next face the winner of the other quarterfinal between third seed Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei and Alwi Farhan of Indonesia.

Earlier, continuing their fine run in the tournament, the celebrated Indian men's doubles pair of Satwik and Chirag cruised into the semifinal, defeating their Malaysian opponents in three games.

Satwik and Chirag, who have been on a roll in the past few weeks, having clinched the BWF World Championships bronze medal recently, displayed superb coordination to overwhelm the fighting duo of Arif Junaidi and Roy King Yap 21-14, 20-22, 21-16 in a 64-minute contest of the USD 500,000 event.

The eighth-seeded Indian pair made a slow start, but once they found momentum at 12-all, they surged ahead with powerful smashes, conceding little to their opponents and clinching the last five points in a row.

The Malaysians found their rhythm in the second game and made a strong comeback,

Patidar and Rathod give a clear edge to Central

Central now enjoys a strong innings lead of 235 runs

BENGALURU, 12 SEPT

Skipper Rajat Patidar and Yash Rathod exploited the lack of spin bowling options in South Zone ranks to craft easy-on-the-eye hundreds, taking Central Zone to a commanding 384 for five on Day 2 of the Duleep Trophy final here on Friday.

Central now enjoys a strong innings lead of 235 runs after Patidar (101, 115 balls) and Rathod (137 batting, 188 balls) scored their 15th and 7th first-class centuries respectively.

Saransh Jain (47 batting) was giving company to Rathod at stumps.Before Patidar and Rathod milked 167 runs for the fourth wicket to take the match decisively away from South, the former were in some trouble at 93 for three.

Overnight 50 for no loss, Central added 102 runs in the first session but lost openers Danish Malewar (53), Akshay Wadkar (22), and Shubham Sharma (6) in quick succession. Pacer Gurjapneet Singh (3/74) was the pick of bowlers in that session, jagging the ball around under grey skies to beat the batters often.

In the morning session, he was rewarded with the wickets of Malewar and Shubham, while fellow quick Vasuki Koushik accounted for Wadkar, who inexplicably shouldered arms to a delivery on the off-stump.

Patidar 101 and Rathod 137 batting scored their 15th and 7th first-class centuries, respectively PHOTO: PTI

But the pitch and conditions eased out in the second and third sessions, benefitting Patidar and Rathod. Patidar took Central past South Zone's first innings total of 148, when he swept leg-spinner Ricky Bhui for a boundary.

Once the primary target of the first innings lead was achieved, Patidar and Rathod shifted gears to add 124 runs in the post-lunch session.Patidar was the enforcer as he played some delightful shots around the ground, and punished Bhui with a sequence of 4, 6, 4, but even those beefy hits carried his inherent elegance. Soon, he smoked Gurjapneet for a four and six off successive balls to move into the 90s, and the hundred came without much delay with a single off left-arm spinner Ankit Sharma. But Rathod and Jain added 118 runs for the unfinished sixth wicket stand to stretch Central's lead past the 200-run mark, and carry them closer to the Duleep title.

Central Zone 384 for 5 (Rathod 137*, Patidar 101, Malewar 53, Gurjapneet 3-74) lead South Zone 149 by 235 runs. —*PTI*

DULEEP TROPHY

AFTER SMOOTH START

Bangladesh braces for stern SL test

ABU DHABI, 12 SEPT

Buoyed by a comfortable win over Hong Kong, Bangladesh will face a far sterner test when they take on six-time champions Sri Lanka in a Group B clash of the Asia Cup here on Friday, a contest that could go a long way in deciding the fate of the tough group.

Chasing an elusive Asia Cup title, Bangladesh's campaign got off to a steady start as skipper Litton Das struck a composed 59 in a seven-wicket win over Hong Kong on Wednesday.

While the margin of victory was convincing, the performance exposed a few areas of concern, particularly in bowling, with pacer Taskin Ahmed and leg-spinner Rishad Hossain going for runs despite picking wickets.

Against Sri Lanka, however, Bangladesh cannot afford the same lapses.

The islanders, led by Charith Asalanka, have quietly built a formidable unit combining top-order solidity with middle-order power and a spin attack tailor-made for UAE conditions.

Pathum Nissanka, Kusal Mendis, and Kusal Perera provide stability at the top, while Asalanka, Dasun Shanak, and Kamindu Mendis add depth and finishing ability.

Sri Lanka has also recalled middle-order batter Janith Liyanage, handing him a T20I return after three years.

Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka Match starts at 8.00 pm IST

The 30-year-old, who struck a match-winning 70 not out in the recent ODI series in Zimbabwe, adds depth to their seam-bowling all-rounder options alongside Shanaka and Chamika Karunaratne.

Skipper Litton Das led from the front as Bangladesh registered a comfortable seven-wicket win over Hong Kong in their Asia Cup opener here on Thursday.

Bangladesh put up a disciplined bowling effort to limit Hong Kong to 143 before Das (59 off 39) scored a solid half-century to anchor his team's chase. —*PTI*

FOCUS FIRMLY ON MATCH

India-Pakistan clash will be interesting: Coach Kotak

DUBAI, 12 SEPT

India's batting coach Sitanshu Kotak on Friday said the team's focus has solely been on cricket since the BCCI "aligned itself" with the government's decision to play against Pakistan in the Asia Cup, brushing aside the noise around the politically charged contest.

The traditional rivals will face off here on Sunday in what will be the first match between the two sides since the escalation of the border conflict in May. Once BCCI said they were aligned with the government's decision, our focus was always on the match.

It's India versus Pakistan, and it will be an interesting game," Kotak told mediapersons on the sidelines of India's training session at the ICC Academy ground."India versus Pakistan is always a competitive game," he added. As per a new policy announced by the government recently, India will not engage in any bilateral sporting contest with Pakistan but will continue to face the neighbours in multilateral tournaments such as the ongoing Asia Cup cricket tournament or events organised by the ICC.

We should not talk about individuals: Kapil Dev

The legendary Kapil Dev on Friday backed India to win the Asia Cup but stressed collective efforts taking precedence over individual brilliance ahead of the high-voltage clash against Pakistan in Dubai. —*PTI*

Gaganjeet wins inaugural IGPL tournament

LONDON, 12 SEPT

Gaganjeet Bhullar has ushered in a new chapter in Indian golf by clinching the inaugural IGPL Invitational title. He showcased his exceptional skills by carding a 2-under 70 final round, solidifying his noteworthy presence in the sport.

Bhullar, celebrated for his prowess with 11 previous Asian Tour wins, carved a 5-under total across three days at the Chandigarh Golf Club, securing his victory by two shots against his formidable opponent, M Dharma.

Singh's exit marked India's first medal-less men's campaign in over a decade, contrasting with the previous success in Tashkent. Despite his aggressive strategy and final-round efforts, Singh fell short against a more experienced opponent, concluding the men's participation in the championship. —*PTI*

Gaganjeet PHOTO: PTI

BCCI following government stance: Arun

NEW DELHI, 12 SEPT

IPL chairman Arun Dhumal on Friday said the BCCI is strictly adhering to the government's stance on cricketing ties with Pakistan amid heightened tensions following the Pahalgam terror attack and 'Operation Sindoor'.

The government has made it very clear that we will not play bilaterals and only feature against Pakistan in multilateral tournaments.

We are only following the government's advice," Dhumal said during a joint interaction with reporters at the Playcom Business of Sports Conclave.

As per a new policy announced by the government recently, India will not engage in any bilateral sporting contest with Pakistan but will continue to face the neighbours in multilateral tournaments such as the ongoing Asia Cup cricket tournament.On the sponsorship vacuum created by fantasy sports gaming platform Dream11's exit as partner, Dhumal said that the process of finalising a replacement is already underway."What is done is done.

We have started the process of finalising the sponsors and will get to know about it in the next 2–3 weeks," he said.The BCCI has terminated its jersey sponsorship deal with Dream11 due to the Indian government's ban on real-money gaming, as stipulated in the new Promotion and Regulation of Online Gaming Act. —*PTI*

Arun Dhumal PHOTO: PTI

Minakshi cruises to semifinal

LIVERPOOL, 12 SEPT

Indian boxer Minakshi Hooda assured the country of its fourth medal at the ongoing World Championships as she defeated England's Alice Pumphrey to enter the 48kg semifinals here on Friday. The lanky Minakshi won by unanimous decision over the U19 world champion Pumphrey in the quarterfinal.Preferring to box on the back foot and making optimum use of her long reach, Minakshi landed straight shots at will while keeping the local favourite at bay. With the win, Minakshi is assured of at least a bronze medal.She joins the trio of semifinalists, Jaismine Lamboria (57kg) and Pooja Rani (80kg), in confirming medals for India. —*PTI*

DAVIS CUP: DE MINAUR TO OPEN TIE FOR AUSTRALIA

SYDNEY, 12 SEPT

World number eight Alex de Minaur pledged Friday to "make life difficult" for Belgium as he strives to put Australia into the Davis Cup finals for a fourth straight year.

Davis Cup 2025 qualifier 2nd Round between Australia and Belgium on 13-14 September

Alex de Minaur PHOTO: PTI

But he faces a tricky encounter against 91st-ranked Raphael Collignon in Saturday's opening singles rubber in their second-round qualifier at Sydney.

Collignon made his presence felt at the just-completed US Open, posting a career-best win over world number 12 and former finalist Casper Ruud en route to the third round.

"He's going to come after me and my job is to make his life difficult, basically," said De Minaur, who made the last eight at Flushing Meadows.

"We're playing at home, we're playing at a court that I love, and hopefully I can come out tomorrow. —*PTI*

WISSA TO MISS WOLVES MATCH DUE TO INJURY

MADRID, 12 SEPT

Newcastle United's recruit Yoane Wissa will have to wait for his debut after an injury suffered on international duty ruled him out of Saturday's Premier League match against Wolverhampton Wanderers, manager Eddie Howe said on Friday.

Wissa was signed for a fee of 55 million pounds ($74.43 million), following a protracted transfer saga in which his previous club, Brentford, repeatedly rejected bids from Newcastle for the forward, leading to a stand-off. —*PTI*

FIDE GRAND SWISS

Nihal stuns Maghsoodloo to join leaders

SAMARKAND, 12 SEPT

Grandmaster Nihal Sarin halted Parham Maghsoodloo's unbeaten run with a brilliant victory to join the leaders after the seventh round of the FIDE Grand Swiss here, while R Vaishali also regained sole lead in the women's section.

However, world champion D Gukesh's struggles continued as he slumped to a third straight defeat here on Thursday, this time against Turkey's Ediz Gurel, slipping out of contention and down to 10th in the live world rankings with four rounds still to play.

Vaishali, a winner in the previous edition held in the Isle of Man in the United Kingdom, outclassed her Chinese counterpart in the seventh round and now sits half a point behind Russian Kateryna Lagno.

Nihal Sarin and D Gukesh PHOTO: PTI

The day, however, belonged to Sarin, who came up with an exemplary display on both flanks.

The Queen pawn opening as white worked well for Nihal as he was able to push for an advantage with little at stake, and Maghsoodloo erred in calculation when it really mattered.

Gukesh suffers a hat-trick of defeats

World champion D Gukesh's struggles continued as he slumped to a third successive defeat, losing to 16-year-old Turkish Grandmaster Ediz Gurel in the seventh round of the FIDE Grand Swiss here on Thursday.

Coming off reverses to USA's Abhimanyu Mishra and Nikolas Theodorou of Greece, the rest day did little to arrest Gukesh's slide as he blundered a bishop in the endgame to extend his losing streak. He now has three points from seven outings and needs to win all of his matches to stay in contention. —*PTI*